The English in The Middle Ages

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THE ENGLISH
IN
THE MIDDLE AGES.

THE ENGLISH

IN

THE MIDDLE AGES;

FROM THE NORMAN USURPATION TO THE DAYS OF THE STUARTS.

Their Mode of Life, Dress, Arms, Occupations, and Amusements.

AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE MEDIÆVAL REMAINS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

BY

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TO THE RIGHT HON.

SIR HARRY VERNEY, BART., M.P.,

THIS COURSE OF LECTURES

IS

DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFATORY LETTER.

DEAR SIR HARRY VERNEY,

Presuming on the cordial reception which you gave me on my return to England, after an absence of more than thirty years, and which I felt the more as I had no claim upon your consideration beyond being the step-son of an old friend, I now dedicate to you this very humble attempt to render the study of our own historic treasures more accessible to the English public by clothing it in a popular dress, from which the cobwebs of the Dryasdust School have, to some extent, been brushed away.

I feel more than ordinary pleasure in seeing your name in connection with this work, for you are, perhaps, the only one remaining of a wide circle of friends of my beloved step-father who can appreciate the vast debt of gratitude I owe to him for careful training, and for the cultivation of any taste for investigation I may possess: at the same time it affords me an opportunity of publicly expressing my thanks to you for the kind words which have encouraged me to remain in England and devote myself to the arduous task I felt called upon to undertake.

This task is no less than to try to interest my countrymen in Old English things—especially in their Language and their History. In the following pages I wish to show that we have proofs in the National Museum of the existence of a history and a literature in ancient times of which we have reason to be justly proud.

But we have been referred, as I have already pointed out in other works, to foreign models in literature and art, to the neglect of home-born excellence, which has remained hitherto uncared for. Our schoolmasters have taught us to write Latin, *not* English; while archæologists, antiquaries, and historians are too apt to underrate the importance of our early national records as compared with those of Greece and Rome. Well may we exclaim with the German poet:

"Warum in die Ferne greifen,
Wenn das Gute liegt so nah'?"

Being neither Greek nor Roman, but a son of that race which hurled Imperial Rome from her seat, I want to see the study of our own ancient and mediæval history engaged in with ardour. I want English people to be really interested in the early events of their own race; and by publishing these Lectures I hope to show them that *anybody* working conscientiously in his own sphere, whatever that may be, may do something to throw a light on portions of history which should not be allowed to remain in darkness.

Believe me to remain,

Very sincerely yours,

J. FREDERICK HODGETTS.

London, September, 1885.

INTRODUCTION.

This work is printed from the MS. of a course of Lectures delivered at the British Museum on the same principle and much in the same way as those which appeared under the title of *Older England*, of which, indeed, it may be regarded as a continuation.

Those Lectures treat of the Anglo-Saxon remains in the British Museum, and the object in them was to build up from those remains a history of our remote forefathers as perfectly distinct from the nations of so-called classical antiquity, and to prove that we were not copyists "in that old iron time". I showed how the forms of our swords and shields were widely different from classic models—in fact, as different as possible for objects answering the same purposes to be. I showed that we had an early language and a literature which, without any mixture of Roman taint, were things to be proud of; and I entered an urgent protest against the system which, in our schools, forces upon us the study of an alien language and literature as guides to our own, with which they have no kinship save the remote relationship proved by Max Müller to exist among all members of the Aryan family.

The following Lectures tend to show that even in later times than those taken cognizance of in *Older England*, the Latin element, introduced by the Norman usurpation, did not mingle with the English elements of which we were composed; and, in fact, instead of our becoming Norman, the Normans became English.

Farther on in the story of our race we certainly do find French and Italian names for pieces of armour, but this was because those pieces of armour were of French or Italian origin, and never flourished on English soil, being smashed, as Rome had been, by the heavy hammer or fiercer gunpowder of the opposing Teuton.

In the progress of this investigation I have had to refer, for customs, dress, habits, arms, and armour, to the priceless manuscripts of our noble collection at the British Museum. And here I must acknowledge the extreme courtesy and kindness of Mr. E. M. Thompson, the Keeper of these precious relics. Every facility was afforded me by Mr. Thompson, and the gentlemen in his department, for pointing out to my audience the actual places in the MSS. themselves on which my assertions are based. No audience ever yet had such treasures displayed before them, and no public lecturer was ever more cordially assisted in his labours than I have been in giving these Lectures.

Besides the documentary evidence of the MSS., I was enabled, when speaking of the armour worn by our hardy sires, to refer to some excellent specimens preserved in the Mediæval Room; and though the number of these pieces is not great, the lessons they teach are as genuine as though the Museum were crammed with armour.

To Dr. Bond I have again to express my best thanks for the courtesy with which he has co-operated with me in this endeavour to utilise the resources of the Museum. Under his auspices a convenient lecture-room has been arranged in the building, which obviates the necessity of using the galleries for lecturing in, a custom attended with considerable inconvenience. There is now no reason why men who have made any particular branch of knowledge

their special study should not make use of the public collection to illustrate their views, and take advantage of this new lecture-room to enunciate them.

It may seem like ingratitude in me to take exception against a work to which I am so much indebted as Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick's *Critical Enquiry into Antient Arms and Armour*, but, in carefully considering the subject of chain-mail armour, I have been reluctantly compelled to show that he has been carried away by theory in that part of his subject. Authority as he unquestionably is, on plate-armour, I am sorry to say that I do not find his assertions regarding chain-mail borne out by the evidence of the monuments and the manuscripts.

With regard to the subject of non-metallic armour, I found it too large a subject to treat in one and the same Lecture with metallic armour, and to my great regret it was found to be beyond the scope of the series to devote another to the subject of armour.

If the perusal of these pages should induce any scholar to throw aside his Xenophon or Cicero, and bring his trained skill to bear upon the equally "classic" lines of our forefathers, albeit of less remote antiquity, I shall indeed be repaid for the labour which I have expended on the subject. There is an immense field open to Englishmen, and the work in that field should be to them as it has been to me, a labour of love.

J. FREDERICK HODGETTS.

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GUTHLAC, Life of St.	1848.
HAIGH.—"Conquest of Britain"	1861.
Do. "Anglo-Saxon Sagas"	1861.
Illustrations to "Cædmon"	1832.
LAPPENBERG—"History of the Anglo-Saxon Kings"	1881.
LAYAMON'S "Brut" (Sir F. Madden)	1847.
MALLET—"Northern Antiquities"	1847.
MEYRICK (Sir Samuel)—"A Critical Inquiry into Antient Arms and Armour" (Planché)	1852.
MORRIS (Dr. Richard)—"Historic Outlines of English Accidence"; "Specimens of Early English"	1882.
MULLER (Professor Max)—"Science of Language"	1875.
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STRUTT (Joseph)—"Dress and Habits." (Planché)	1852.
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Lecture I.

THE NORMANS.

LECTURE I.

THE NORMANS.

No nation in the world, ancient or modern, possesses, or ever possessed, so perfect a literature as we do. And though much of our ancient wealth in the hand-written books of the Early English time (vulgarly called the Anglo-Saxon period) perished in the destruction by the Danes of the grand library at Peterborough in the ninth century, we still have enough to teach us how our fathers lived, dressed, and thought in the old time, before us.

It was the custom of the illuminators of the Middle Ages to represent the personages in their account, whether historical, fabulous, or mythic, in the dress and with the arms of their contemporaries, thus teaching us how those contemporaries lived and dressed. Consequently, we can gain from the drawings in these manuscripts more information on these subjects than from any other source.

As, however, few manuscripts that remain to us are older than the tenth century, and certainly none, furnished with the illustrations from which we gain our information, are older than that date, we are referred to it as the starting point in these historical considerations. Still, bearing in mind how very slow the changes were in fashions, arms, and art, before that period, we have every reason to conclude that the pictures of the tenth century would also represent

the dress, manners, and customs of five centuries before: and this we find, on comparing histories, legends, and remains left in the tombs, to be actually the case. This is true of the habits, dress, and customs of our own race, and of the allied Scandinavians, whose remote traditions and numerous archæological remains, of earlier date than the immigration to England, are, when not absolutely identical with our own, so nearly akin to them as to furnish corroborative evidence of what they were, and to show us that our pictures of the tenth and eleventh centuries might have been drawn in the fifth and sixth.

This refers to mediæval matters. Of more ancient customs and dress our forefathers could have no idea, and therefore they represented the heroes and historical personages of higher antiquity, and of other races, in the dress, arms, and armour of the time in which the limner lived. Thus, Judith and Holofernes, Cain and Abel, the daughter of Herodias, and others, are dressed as Anglo-Saxons in Saxon MSS.; while the changes taking place in the Norman period are clearly pointed out in the later documents, in the Bayeux Tapestry, and other monuments of the Norman times. These show that the change in question was not very important in any way, though sufficient to be distinctive to the eye of the antiquary.

However people may doubt the authenticity of some of the relations in these precious documents, disputing the accuracy of the statements in Layamon's *Brut* concerning the adventures of certain British kings in the course of their wars against the English, not the shadow of a doubt can be cast on the authority of the illuminations as to the

dress, habits, manners, and customs of the time at which the drawings were made.

The valuable collection of Early English, commonly called Anglo-Saxon, remains, now preserved in the British Museum, is sufficient, as I have already had the honour of pointing out to you in former lectures, to establish the fact that we are a pure race, descended from the Scandinavian settlers of the fifth century, having from educational and national prejudices as little *mixture* in our blood as any people in Europe. The statements I then made were confirmed by numerous references to manuscripts preserved in the British Museum and in other wealth-hoards of learning, and to the relics under the guardianship of Mr. Franks. I have now to direct your attention to times more familiar to the majority of my audience, though often viewed in a strongly coloured light by our historians.

I want to show you that the unfortunate issue of the struggle at Hastings did not Gallicise or Normanise the English; and that customs, manners, dress, habits, and language are, and have been, essentially English all through. The rapid glance which I shall have to throw over six centuries will not fall beyond the walls of our noble national collection.

In the Anglo-Saxon room I have shown you the grand old swords which won this land for us fourteen hundred years ago. The steel remains, so does the form of the blade; and so do the Runes on the rich gold ornaments; and in the same way we shall, I hope, be able to say that our true metal remains unchanged; that the very form of our external show is English, and that our language, like

those Runes, has undergone no more actual change than other Teutonic tongues have suffered which have not been exposed to the external influence of a foreign idiom growing up and perishing (like Norman-French in England) beside them.

Let us commence, as we did in the last course of lectures which I had the honour to deliver before you, with the sword. The same weapon that converted Britain into England placed a Norman duke on the English throne, and so securely placed him there, that in counting our kings we reckon from him, a foreigner, rather than from our own English line, excluding Alfred and other great men of whom we ought to be proud, while we continue the practice through a line of aliens of some of whom we certainly ought to be ashamed.

The Normans, like ourselves, were descended from Scandinavian ancestors; but, unlike ourselves, they abandoned their language and religion when accepting the Duchy of Normandy at the hand of Charles the Simple. Their tastes remained Scandinavian and warlike to the last; their acceptation of Christianity being in the first instance nothing but a stratagem. Rolf Ganger, the founder of the dynasty, certainly did his best to improve the land which came into his possession; and very probably the exaggerated forms of arms, armour, and vestments which he introduced were the result of his design of retaining them at any cost, and forcing them upon his retainers, both Scandinavian and Frankish.

Rolf Ganger was the son of Yarl Regnvald, and was banished from Norway by Harald Hárfagra for undertaking a Viking expedition after it had been prohibited

by that king. Rolf was a famous Viking, and in every respect an accomplished warrior, so that when he came to govern his duchy, it is no wonder that he made the people of Normandy as warlike as himself and his followers. But, unlike Hengst and Horsa, he at last foreswore the faith and language of his fathers.

What was the result? A modification of everything which had previously marked him and his men. The sword, the most distinguishing feature of a nation, changed its form. Instead of the stout, stern Scandinavian weapon of former days, with its Oriental-looking hilt, its flattened "ball", small guard, and sturdy blade, we get the modification called by us a Norman sword, and by them the *longue épée*.

In this word *épée* we stumble upon something unfamiliar as applied to a sword. There is nothing for our ear answering to the spell that lies in the word "blade", with all its various meanings, whether of the leaf or the sword. We don't like *épée*, and *épée* never was and never could become English. We turn to a Latin dictionary, and find the word even there a foreigner, existing as *spatha*, derived from the Greek σπάθη, a flat piece of wood for stirring mixtures, our medical "spatula". The name is applied in the form "spatha" by the Romans to the leaf of a palm tree, and to a broad flat sword without a point. Unfamiliar as this proud Norman word for a *sword* may be, it lives in our humble *spade*. Nor does it seem anything more or less than a Teutonic word in its origin, existing, as it does, in the oldest Scandinavian dialect with which we are acquainted—Icelandic—where we find it as *spaði*, a spade. A spade in Swedish and

Danish is called *spadé*, in German *spathe* or *spathen*, all from the root *spa*, whence also our *span*, meaning to spread out. From this foreign word the neo-Latinisms of *spada*, *spardon*, *spadille*, and so forth, are derived, all denoting a very broad sword; and we are able to see the origin of the Greek word itself, as being nothing more than a borrowed expression from another race to denote expansion, or spreading.

But, as in the cases of gladius and blade, we are referred to leaf-like forms in nature, so we find in that of *spathe* a connection with the vegetable world. It is the name given to the broad sheath of a flower called *spathe* by botanists. Yet it does not seem that the application of the name to the part of a flower is the primitive use of the word. In the derivations from the root *spa* (whence span, space, and other words of the kind) we find one of the earliest words to be the Sanskrit *sphây*, to swell, increase, "broaden", having no special reference to the sword whatever. I need not say that the old form of the French *épée* was *espée*, whence the *s* has been elided.

The evidence is that the old Norman name for the old blade is artificial, as the object itself, a mere modification or alteration. It died off as a term for the sword in England, where it had already flourished in the form of *spadu*, a spade, long before the advent of the Normans. The ball at the end of the hilt, called by the Normans the *pommelle*, or little apple, has survived in our own military nomenclature, but almost all the other portions of the sword remain English. The two extremes, the pommelle and the point, are foreign, while hilt, guard

(from *warian*), tang, blade, and grip, are all pure English.

The Norwegians under Rolf Ganger being nearly all men who had been banished by Harald from Norway, or who had quitted the land voluntarily, were colonists, nor can we believe for a moment that they suddenly ceased to be Teutons, and became Romance. No act of volition could have effected such a change. We have to remember also that the Frankish language which these Scandinavian Teutons determined to adopt was not a pure descendant of Latin. The Franks were Teutons too, and in the course of years had acquired the debased Latin called French, referred to by Max Müller as "a Romanic dialect, whose grammar is but a blurred copy of the grammar of Cicero. But its dictionary is full of Teutonic words, more or less Romanised to suit the pronunciation of the Roman inhabitants of Gaul."

This "Germanised Latin", as Max Müller calls it, was the language which the Norwegians had to acquire, and they, in doing so, introduced into its vocabulary many Scandinavian words and phrases that deflected Norman French still farther from Latin than the German of the Franks had done. And this hotch-potch was to be thrust into the mouths of the English, who had preserved their mother tongue at least pure and uncontaminated. What was the result? It was as oil on water—the two forms of speech lived on independently of each other, and never coalesced. Norman French died for want of congenial soil wherein to grow; and being very much akin to what we call "slang", has passed away entirely, existing in no spoken form, being only preserved in a sort of dried

unmumbled condition in some of our legal terms, which take our lawyers so long to learn, and cost *us* so much when they know them.

The Old English sword was a more useful weapon than the Norman *espée*, especially for troops accustomed to fight on foot. The Norman blade was longer, the hilt larger; the ball, instead of being an oblate spheroid, was a globular piece of iron; while the guard, instead of curving gently downwards on each side of the blade, originally to prevent the weapon from slipping through the aperture in the armour through which it was thrust, became a long straight piece of iron, forming a cross with the hilt and blade.

I have in former lectures alluded to the veneration in which the sword was held by our forefathers. I have shown you how the oath on the sword was of more importance to them than the oath on the bracelet, which was only binding in civil, not military, cases; and now we find that their Norman cousins, though Christian warriors, had as great, if not a greater, respect for this mystic weapon than their pagan sires. Doubtless the old feeling survived, and, like many other pagan observances, "sword-worship" passed into Christianity, and became accounted for by the form of the weapon being identical with the gracious symbol. Certain it is that Norman knights knelt to their cross-swords in the Holy Land with as much devotion as a monk bowed to his crucifix, or a priest to the holy sign on the high altar. Notwithstanding this, the Norman warrior trusted more in his lance than in his sword in the hour of battle, because he had become accustomed to act more on horseback than on foot, more

in firm line than in single combat. The sure and sturdy formation of the wedge he had abandoned, and had adopted the system of attack in line three or four deep. Had the English only retained their wedge at Hastings, or rather at Pevensey, many disasters to the nation would have been avoided, for the Norman lance could not penetrate that solid mass, while the Norman knights went down before the English axes to an extent that gained the battle the name of *Sanglac*, or sea of blood, among the invaders. The ruse of pretended flight drawing the English from their impenetrable wedge lost them the victory, which, despite their inferiority in numbers, would have attended their efforts had they only retained their formation, for the Normans had lost such numbers that they were already in despair of success. William would never have hit upon the ruse had he not seen the fatal eagerness with which the English pursued the foot and cavalry of Bretagne and other allies in his left wing. The death of Harold was the real cause of the victory, for if he had not fallen, that victory, supposing he could have gained it, would have contributed but little to give William the sceptre. The force of England was unconquered—a small portion of it only had been exerted; and if Harold had survived, or any other heir at all competent to the crisis, William would have gained no more by the victory than the privilege of fighting another battle with diminished strength.

In this invasion the Norman Duke came to a crown which had been assured to him by its former possessor, and which had been assumed by a man who had sworn allegiance to William. The court party, so to say, was

prepared to receive him, and recognised him as the rightful claimant, regarding Harold more or less as a usurper. Many of the "upland thanes", or country gentlemen, as we should now call them, affected Norman manners, and William was crowned at Westminster with great rejoicings as a rightful successor.

On the other hand, the conquest of Britain by the English was the commencement of a war of extermination, perhaps the most cruel recorded in history. Like their favourite wedge formation, the fine edge was introduced in the fifth century, when certain Northern heroes came to assist the Britons. These were succeeded by more; and the tide of conquest rolled in increasing waves of military occupation, with the deadly purpose of driving out and cutting down the dwellers in the land, until Scandinavia, or that part of it which furnished forth these fierce warriors, was better represented here than in the land of their birth. William brought at once his whole force of 60,000 men to assist his claim, and had he been killed instead of Harold, there would have been an end to the Normans in England. As it was, he lost more than half his army at Hastings, or rather Pevensey, and if there had been a strong feeling against him in England, he would never have reached Westminster to be crowned. When we take into consideration how many troops had deserted from Harold: how many were on board the English ships sent to cut off William's retreat: how many refused to take up arms in the quarrel; and, finally, how many were directly favourable to William, we shall see at once that the small force of Normans were not conquerors of the nation, but of Harold.

Much has been said of the Normanising power of the invasion, the real fact of the matter being that the consequence of the assertion of absolute power by the Normans was the *de*-Normanisation of the English, who had assumed certain Normanisms under the Confessor. We find very few remains of Norman war in the shape of arms and armour, while we possess plenty of Anglo-Saxon swords, shields, spear-heads, arrow-heads, and so forth. What *do* we find? *Castles*—strong towers for the robber baron to hide in from the just fury of the oppressed—castles, unknown to the free, open-hearted Englishman, whose only defence was his shield. The conquest of Britain showed the weak British, imitation Roman, sword in numbers lying in the beds of rivers, and the big Scandinavian weapon by the victor's side in his grave. But, save a very few specimens scattered here and there in museums, there are no Norman swords in England, and the castles are all decayed ruins. A strange *conquest*, truly, where the conqueror had to *hide* from the conquered! Contrast this with the conquest of Britain by the English, where open fields remained, and the warrior—farmer, soldier, sailor, and ploughman, all in one—lived on the land he fought for, cheered by the tender ties of wife and child, which have come down to us undisturbed by *femme* and *enfant*.

When William saw that the time was come, he threw off the mask and showed his intention of making England a part of Normandy. Then, for a time, by the fault of the English themselves, the history of England is taken up by Norman chroniclers, who, to flatter the great Duke, wrote songs to his praise in the slang they loved. The

English, too late, saw their error; but the strongholds standing all over the country kept them in check. Their bows and arrows were of slight avail against stone and mortar. Still, many brave outlaws, from Hereward down to bold Robin Hood, kept up a guerilla warfare against the Norman rule, thereby immensely improving their knowledge of the bowman's craft.

Where are we, then, to look for the history of our race? Not in the one-sided, vain-glorious boastings of the menials of the robber barons. No; our history is written in the ballads of our race, in the quaint English of the *Chronicle*, in the more modern story of the *Brut*, and in the rich store of illuminated MSS.—to be found in the British Museum.

Look at the Norman sword in the Mediæval Room. What does it tell us? It tells us a story of pride and boastfulness. It is too long to wield with comfort, for the Normans fought with lances on horseback, trusting to the impetuous shock derived from the speed of their animals. For a cavalry charge, when the lance was shivered, or its point made blunt, the long Norman sword was useful, but was far from being the comfortable weapon (for the possessor, of course) that the true English blade had proved in many a combat with the Kelt. And the Kelt knew which was best. He never copied the Norman *espée* and *espa*; the English sword and shield were the prototypes of the claymore and target still to be found in the Highlands.

As the sword was preposterously elongated, so were all the other articles of the warrior's equipment made longer than had been the custom in Scandinavia. While

we retained the short, light, useful *rock*, or tunic, of our remote Scandinavian home, the Norman lengthened his *côte hardi* until it became necessary to cut it back and front to enable him to ride. This gave the idea of fastening the inside of each portion of the garment round the inside of the leg; and this form was imitated in the shirt of mail, which now became known by the German name of *hauberk*, from *hals*, the neck, and *bergen*, to protect, with its diminutive, habergeon. The end of the centre half-hoop of iron protecting the top of the head became elongated until the Norman nasal helmet was formed. And, finally, the shield was carried to an extravagant length, assuming a sort of kite shape, the head of which was like the half of the old Scandinavian round target, while the lower portion exhibited the Frankish triangle joined on to the half circle the whole being greatly lengthened.

The great authority for these assertions is the wonderful piece of tapestry at Bayeux, in Normandy, worked by the hands of Matilda, wife of Duke William, representing the events preceding the battle of Hastings, and showing the Normans in their fantastic elongations of the ancient fashion, and the English in the dress of their ancestors.

The English rather despised the custom of wearing armour at all. We find them in stout leather *rocks*, trusting to their skill with axe and shield rather than to mail defences; and this national garment (the name of which still continues to be used for a modern coat in Scandinavia and Germany) was as short at the time of Harold as it had been in the days of Hengst and Horsa.

Some few Norman women, coming over after the coronation of the Duke as King of England, set the fashion

amongst the English ladies of calling articles of dress by Norman-French names: thus, the wimple came to be called the "couvre-chef", soon corrupted into kerchief, in which form it is not quite dead yet. But the form of the wimple underwent no change, as you may see by consulting almost any MSS. of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Strutt, in his excellent work on the *Dress and Habits of the English*, alludes to the super-tunic or sur-coat as a Norman invention, although he has drawings of English women in the "over-slop", which is precisely the same thing, though much shorter. Here is an instance of Normanising, though not a very important one; besides, it seems to have been quite as much the fashion amongst English ladies to adopt Norman names for common articles before the Conquest as at the present day.

Certainly the Normans did not, as a rule, bring their wives and families to England, as the English brought theirs to Britain, so that intermarriages were common between the English and Normans; and this had the result of swamping the latter, or Anglicising them, rather than Normanising the English, as far as the actual population was concerned. That the sceptre was in the hands of a foreigner necessarily rendered the language of the court that of the foreign king. The judges, as appointed by him, were almost of course his direct servants, because they would be powerfully instrumental in bringing all classes of the community under the same rubric. But his laws were not very numerous. Of the fifty-two laws, properly called the laws of William the Conqueror, many are only translations of the laws of Alfred into Norman-French and Latin; others are rather modifications than translations

of the English laws. Thus, the thirty different cases of injury to the person, with the respective fine for each case, forming thirty different laws, are simplified into one, with seven small clauses covering the whole ground. The original laws, though few, are not very different in spirit from the old English laws amongst which they stand. William retained the old weights and measures, and especially confirmed the laws of Edward the Confessor. It is worthy of remark that he does not call himself King of England, Rex Angliæ, but Rex Anglorum, King of the English, which, according to heraldic ideas, is a very important difference.

We might come to the conclusion, in carefully looking through the laws of the Conqueror and of Henry I, that the written code at least is nothing like so severe as we should have expected. But the apparent equity of William the Conqueror was, after all, a mere blind, for the greatest injustice ever done to a nation was perpetrated through the medium of this seeming fairness of conduct. He gave his word to govern according to English laws already existing, but he translated them into Norman-French, which to the mass of his subjects was unintelligible; besides which, all the new laws promulgated by him were given either in French or Latin, or both. This does not strike one as being so very bad, after all, if the laws were only good and upright; but the real hardship consisted in his expecting, or rather requiring, that all Englishmen should know and understand them, although presented in a language of which they were ignorant. On their failure, the punishment was swift and sharp. Ignorance of the laws could not be pleaded, and by

putting the enactments of the old line of kings out of the reach of his subjects, he was enabled to commit a most refined and unprincipled act of tyranny, worthy a Roman emperor dealing with a conquered province.

The clamour for the old laws therefore had not so much reference to the enactments themselves, as to the language in which they were written. The new enactments were very similar to the old; but of what use was this to English people, to whom they were presented in Latin or French? When we lose sight of this important fact, and fail to see the wolfish cunning of the Normans beneath the surface, their laws seem to be as English in spirit as any of those of Alfred or Edward.

So much for the testimony of the laws. But the witness borne by the Castle is far stronger. The thick walls, the dungeon, the moat with its drawbridge, tell tales of deeds of violence requiring unheard-of security to keep the perpetrator from the just vengeance of the injured race. Compare the wide hall with its open doors and indiscriminate hospitality, with the perpendicular walls, narrow eyelet holes for shooting down new comers whose appearance might not please the warder,—compare the state of things when each scoundrel baron could imprison whom he liked, with that condition when prisons were unknown!

The English Thane, when not armed in his king's war, was a jovial, hospitable, careless, thriftless, hearty fellow. The Norman was always prepared for war. He never rode out unarmed, and his well-trained steed, his complete covering of chain-mail armour, and his long lance, made him as invulnerable as he was formidable.

I think the two pictures are sufficient to show us, descendants of Edgars, Edwards, and Alfreds, why we are Englishmen, and not Normans; and why, save in a few frivolous expressions, our English tongue disdained to lend itself to Norman speech. The wrath of many an outraged hearth lives in our hatred of the Norman jargon; and the blood that drenched the pleasant fields of England has cried, and not in vain, to Him to whom vengeance belongs.

The Norman baron, shut up in his tower, with just a few retainers—enough to hold the castle against a host of foes, though insufficient to face them in the field—had but a dreary time in the long winter evenings. He had fought for William, who had rewarded him with some fair English land, whose true owner was either dead, fled beyond the seas to serve in far Byzantium, or else hidden, either as a monk or other obscure character, with neither hope nor courage left. The land is now granted to the Norman, who, having robbed his tenants all round, and his neighbours where he could prevail against them, prepares to enjoy himself. How are his dismal evenings to be passed? He is not a drunkard; he cares more for refined delicacy of flavour in his wine than for quantity. Where an Englishman would have swilled some gallon or two of ale, the Norman is contented with a modest cup of exquisitely flavoured wine, which gratifies his palate, but which he is far too cautious to drink excessively. He does not amuse himself by consuming enormous quantities of food; he takes as little as possible, but delicately prepared. He does not read, for he has been trained to war. As in the hall of the plundered Thane, the *Glee-*

man formerly chanted the deeds "of the brave days of old", so now the minstrel sings in Norman-French the prowess of the great *Rollo*, as Rolf Gánger has come to be called. There is no very large audience; the knight's squire, some other noble perhaps, and half a dozen retainers, are all who listen to the lays. The rest are on duty in various parts of the building. Some bloodhounds and a Danish wolf-dog of singular strength and ferocity, seem well matched with those stern, dark-browed, unbending warriors.

The *chansons* sung have not come down to us, but William of Malmesbury refers to the "Song of Roland" as *commenced* to be sung by William himself, "that the warlike example of that man might stimulate the soldiers." Other authorities put the song into the mouth of the minstrel Taillefer. But whoever sang it, the effect was that of a military band at the present day.

Instead of listening to the "Glad Gleeman" in a hall blazing with light from an enormous fire in the centre, while, all around, friends, retainers, and guests sat partaking of his hearty hospitality, the new lord sat, like a robber in his lair, suspicious of every sound, surrounded by people who had followed him, as he had followed William, for plunder, all listening with one ear to the minstrel's words, with the other to the howling blast, to detect, perchance, a warning note from a warder's horn. It was not exactly merry England just then.

This taste for minstrelsy, bright on the one hand and somewhat gloomy on the other, was the direct offspring, among both English and Norman, of the veneration of the Scandinavian scald who had delighted their mutual

ancestors with songs of Thor and Odin. But the subjects changed with the surroundings, and the saga which told of the adventures of Odin with his twelve companion gods of Valhalla, who were overthrown at the last day by the giants and monsters, and who rushed to battle, called by the notes of the wonderful horn of Heimdall, the warder of the gods, would, in the mouth of a Christian-Norman-Frenchman, be changed into the song of Charlemagne, his twelve peers, and gjallar-horn to "that dread horn whose blast on Fontarabian echoes borne to great King Charles did come." The descendant of that minstrel in England, hearing in his wanderings of the supposed deeds of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, turned *him* into the hero of the same lay, and sweetly confusing Saracens and Sassanachs (or Saxons), put the latter in the place of the more ancient frost giants, while Odin and the Æsir on the round plain of Idavallr pass naturally through the Charlemagne phase into Arthurian romance, becoming associated with such thorough Frenchmen as Launcelot and the rest.

The association with the south has done the pure old Scandinavian saga no good. It comes out a very corrupt and objectionable production when clad in the indelicate and vicious habit, which the grand old Scandinavians were too proud to adopt. We may turn with pleasure from the scandalous Norman to the pure and high-souled Scandinavian Englishman of seven hundred years before the Norman invasion.

Many of these stern Norman warriors wanted other amusement, and of a more serious kind, than mere songs in praise of their own deeds, or ballads on those of the

fictitious personages that had taken the places of Charlemagne and Arthur, both of whom are Normans. The minstrel would be asked news on all subjects, and was applied to for universal information. Our baron, scowling in almost solitude, like a melodramatic bandit in his cave, was of course much too great a "swell" to read and write; still he felt a sort of craving for knowledge, which the minstrel had to gratify. To enable him to do this, he was referred to histories and the accounts of natural science contained in so-called bestiaries, all written in rhyme, so as to be easily committed to memory. The earliest Norman bestiary, by Philip de Thaun, is now in the national collection, where it is marked as Nero A. v, among the MSS. in the Cottonian Library. It is most curious as a specimen of what kind of learning these illiterate nobles delighted in. Here is part of an account of the Lion:—

"Ço que en Griec est leun, en Franceis *rei* ad nun;
Leuns en mainte guise mutes bestes justise,
Pur ço est reis leuns, or orez les facuns.
Il ad le vis heduz, gros le col e kernuz,
Quarré lu piz devant, ardez e combatant.
Greille ad le trait derere, cue de grant manere,
E le gambe ad plates juste les pez aates;
Les pez ad gros cupefz, luns ungles e curvez;
Quant faim ad u maltalant, bestes mangue ensement;
Cum il cest asne fait, ki rechane e brait.
Or oez senz dutence diçeo signefiance.
Li leun signefie le Fiz Saucte Marie;
Reis est de tute gent, senz nul redutement," etc.

Which is in English:—"What is in Greek a lion, has in French the name king; the lion in many ways rules over many beasts—therefore is the lion king, now you shall

hear how. He has a frightful face, the neck great and hairy. He has the breast before, square and hardy, and ready for fight. His shape behind is slender, his tail of large fashion, and he has flat legs, constrained down to the feet. He has the feet large and cloven, the claws long and curved. When he is hungry or ill-disposed he devours animals without distinction, as he does the ass, which resists and brays. Now hear, without doubt, the signification of this: The lion is the son of St. Mary; he is king of all people without gainsay." And so forth, to a considerable length, drawing mystical parallels between the animal and our Lord.

These minstrels were called *trouveurs* or *finders*, showing they hunted about for whatever they could find, and, without much caring about its quality, converting it to their purpose. Thus the sagas of the North, the tales of England, the legends of Britain, and the mysticism of later Latin writers, were all crammed into their tedious verses. A very remarkable fact connected with this subject has been pointed out by George Ellis in his excellent work entitled *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances*, namely, that the first works ever written in French were derived either from Normandy or England.

The *trouveur* sings the Norman lord to sleep, like Eustace in Marmion, "with song, romance, or lay"; and the squire, or shield-bearer, as we should call him, gives the musician his due share of the wine used in the castle, and asks him news from the North, or whencesoever he longs to have tidings, and he learns that a body of Normans has been attacked by a party of English and

utterly defeated, because of some affront offered to the inhabitants of a village, forsooth. In great indignation, the squire stalks up and down the hall; this wakes up the knight, who asks what has produced this display of emotion. On learning the circumstances, and seeing that it is now early morning, he arms himself and his train, rides forth with them and desolates a village or two to relieve his feelings, and so forth, and so forth, with terrible sameness in the "good old times", when we were taught refinement by our Norman rulers. Heaven save the mark!

This description of our Norman baron is a picture of the average type, and it continued to be a fair picture of him for the whole of the period when a Norman was still a Norman, and had not yet become English. Shrouded within his stone walls, he had no sympathies with the outer world, and beyond riding on a foray to gain food for his retainers, had no interest in it. As long as the feudal system lasted the feudal barons had their minstrels and house friars to read the feudal rolls, telling of the history of their own families, their Norman sires, and even of the island of Britain itself.

There are such "Rolls" in the British Museum, which formerly graced feudal halls in the Middle Ages. Some have been privately printed by Mr. Mayer of Liverpool, to whom I am indebted for a very interesting volume containing copies of six of these manuscripts.

The persons who recited the metrical histories which have been preserved to us, seem to have been somewhat superior to the ordinary minstrels: they were persons whose poetical talents had already acquired fame for

them in the land. With true poetic disregard of the prosaic nature of hard facts, they embellish their narrations with stories of King Arthur and other heroes of romantic fiction, in such a manner as to make their histories veritable mosaics of florid poetry and heavy prose.

These poems, and these relations of wonderful events in the history of chivalry, are supposed to have immensely softened the manners and improved the customs of the hearers. Those manners and customs must have been curious "studies", if these wonderful productions were to cure them, for they are nearly all foully obscene in their language and offensively immoral in tone. The manners of the Norman aristocracy were *not* formed upon the plan of elevating and refining those over whom they had the sway. On the contrary, the tendency of their presence in the island was to degrade the moral tone all round. When we compare the dignified purity of the Scandinavian songs and sagas with the ribaldry of Norman French, and again with the descendants of these in many an old English poem of long past Norman times, we are puzzled to see the benefit conferred upon us by these licentious foreigners.

The holy reverence for the sacred name of woman, so earnestly breathed in our Anglo-Saxon writings, was unknown to the *trouvères* and minstrels of the Norman times. Their flimsy chivalry was but a poor substitute for the devout adoration of the crown of the Creation, so characteristic of the Scandinavian school, from which our own is the descendant. With an absurd and overbearing self-complacency, the robber-baron regarded the villagers of the country round about his gloomy, prison-like castle

as an inferior race, with whom social intercourse was out of the question; but he did not think himself above availing himself of the produce of their industry in the field or workshop; while the gentler sex, though of a race too far beneath him to furnish him with a legitimate wedded partner, was too often brought to lament the attractive nature of those personal charms which have distinguished English women ever since the coming of Hengist. This is too painful, and at the same time too delicate a subject for discussion before a mixed audience; but one circumstance, to which I have before alluded in other lectures, speaks volumes on this point, namely, that while the English brought their wives and families with them to colonise Britain, the Normans came without. No further comment is needed.

But the object of the lighter songs of the Norman poets was not merely to make fun of the *villan*. They devoted much of their wit to the ridicule of the manners of their own priesthood, and the unfaithfulness of their own matrons, whose escapades are regarded as a subject for mirth and social entertainment, rather than for avoidance as degrading, vicious, and injurious to the well-being of society at large. Such, however, is the insidious nature of vice, that this kind of literature spread like the plague, and foully infected the poetry of the English school which arose after the Normans had been swallowed up and forgotten by the English proper.

Thus we can point to a glaring defect in our mediæval poetry, as clearly resulting from our Norman invaders; and as the poetry of a given period shows the manners of the time as truthfully as the illuminations in a manuscript

show the dresses, we may judge of the Norman manners as having been cruel and profligate to an extent without parallel in history.

The despised *villan* was regarded as a being of lower caste, quite in the sense of the word which we use when speaking of the natives of India. This caste, a French poem of the thirteenth century divides into twenty-three classes or kinds, and as this is important in judging of the manners of the time, I will enumerate them.

"First of all comes the piggish villan, who labours in the field, and who, when a passenger inquires the road, replies, 'You know as well as I.' The doggish villan, who will sit before his door on festive days and Sundays, to laugh at everyone who passes; and if he see a gentleman with a hawk on his fist, he will cry, 'Ha! there's a cawing bird, that will have for his supper a-night a fat hen which would be enough for all my family.' The frothy villan is a frenetic villan, who utterly detesteth God and holy church, and all gentility. The villan asinine is he who carries to the feast the cake and the barrel of wine; if it be fair weather he will carry his wife's cloak; if it rain, he will strip himself to his breeches to cover her, that she may not get wet. The apish villan is he who stands before the church door, and looks at the kings, calling out their names as he sees their effigies, whilst some one behind is cutting his purse. The prince villan is one who goes to plead before the bailiff for the other villans, and says, 'Sir, in the times of my grandfather and my great-grandfather, our cows were in these meadows, our sheep in those copses'; and thus he gains a hundred pence from the villans. The hooded

villan is the poor married clerk, who goes to labour with the other villans. The crab-like villan is he who returns from the forest laden with wood, and enters his house backwards, because the door is too low. The grafted villan is one who takes a gentle dame for his wife, exactly as if one should graft a fair pear upon a cabbage, or upon a thornbush, or upon a turnip."

The last contemptuous allusion is quite in the true spirit of caste, and yet, as Wright, the late eminent antiquary whom I quote above, continues:—"From the subject of many of these *fabliaux* we might be led to suppose that, in spite of the strong feeling of caste which then existed, such unions between persons of the two classes were by no means uncommon. The parties are always a peasant, or a villan who has become wealthy, and the daughter of a poor knight, who possesses more beauty than money. The husband is stupid and brutal, the lady cunning and crafty; he is always jealous and suspicious. She resents the ill-treatment she receives, and proves faithless as often as she can find an opportunity; and the writers of the *fabliaux* seem to think her conduct in this case extremely right and proper. The peasant, indeed, in their eyes, had as little right to the possession of such property, as he had to keep hawks or hounds of chase. The frequency of this doctrine, the general character of the stories, and the disgusting obscenity with which many of them are filled, give us no high notion of the morality of the ladies and gentlemen before whom they were recited."*

Among those who lived as parasites upon the vices of

* Wright's *Essays on the Literature, Superstition, and History of England in the Middle Ages.* J. R. Smith, 1846, vol. i. p. 45 *et seq.*

the Norman aristocracy, there arose a new class, the *ribalds* and *letchers* (*ribaldi* and *leccatores*). The latter word, signifying dish lickers, is easily understood, but ribald is not so readily explained. The termination *"ald"* seems to point to a Teutonic origin, but there is no positive explanation to offer of the word itself beyond its signifying a low licentious person. And accordingly we find the ribalds, or ribauds, to be persons who, as Wright says, "had so completely abandoned every sentiment of morality or shame, that, in return for the protection of the nobles, they were the ready instruments of any base work."

"In the crowds which attended the feasts of the princes and nobles, the letchers were not content with waiting for what had been sent away from table, but seized upon the dishes as they were carried from the kitchen to the hall, and it became necessary to invent a new office, that of ushers of the hall, to repress the disorder." "In those great courts", says the *Ancren Riewl*, "they are called letchers who have so lost shame, that they are ashamed of nothing, but seek how they may work the greater villany. This class spread through society like a great sore, and from the terms used in speaking of them we derive a great part of the opprobrious words still used in England."*

For these new expressions, and many more relating to vice and wickedness, we are indebted to the Normans. A vast benefit to a nation, truly!

It has been observed with great truth, that though the English were celebrated for their wool, with which indeed

* *A History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages.* By Thomas Wright. London, 1862, p. 104.

they supplied the rest of the then known world, their use of silks was one of the results of the Conquest; and the increase of luxury in the article of dress extended to other matters. The intercourse with the Flemings tended greatly to increase this state of things. But if the desire of finer clothing, and the vice of aping French manners, were benefits to our nation, as some writers think, we have a frightful set-off against this questionable good in the unquestionable harm brought on us in the reign of the "worthy peer", King Stephen, in the following account, which I take from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*:—

"Anno 1137. This year King Stephen went over sea to Normandy, and he was received there because it was expected that he would be altogether like his uncle, and because he had gotten possession of his treasure, but this he distributed and scattered foolishly. King Henry had gathered together much gold and silver, yet did he no good for his soul's sake with the same. When King Stephen came to England, he held an assembly at Oxford; and there he seized Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, and Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, and Roger, the Chancellor, his nephew, and he kept them all in prison till they gave up their castles. When the traitors perceived that he was a mild man, and a soft, and a good, and that he did not enforce justice, they did all wonder. They had done homage to him, and sworn oaths, but they no faith kept. All became forsworn, and broke their allegiance, for every rich man built his castles, and defended them against him, and they filled the land full of castles. They greatly oppressed the wretched people by making them work at

these castles, and when the castles were finished they filled them with devils and evil men. Then they took those whom they suspected to have any goods, by night and by day, seizing both men and women, and they put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable, for never were any martyrs tormented as these were. They hung some up by their feet, and smoked them with foul smoke; some by their thumbs, or by the head, and they hung burning things on their feet. They put a knotted cord about their heads, and twisted it till it went into the brain. They put them into dungeons, wherein were adders and snakes and toads, and thus wore them out. Some they put into a crucet-house, that is, into a chest that was short and narrow, and not deep, and they put sharp stones in it, and crushed the man therein, so that they broke all his limbs.

"There were fearful and grim things called *sachenteges* in many of the castles, and which two or three men had enough to do to carry. The sachentege was made thus: it was fastened to a beam, having a sharp iron to go round a man's throat and neck, so that he might no ways sit, nor lie, nor sleep, but that he must bear all the iron. Many thousands they exhausted with hunger. I cannot and I may not tell of all the wounds and all the tortures that they inflicted upon the wretched men of this land; and this state of things lasted the nineteen years that Stephen was king, and ever grew worse and worse. They were continually levying an exaction from the towns, which they called *Tenscric;* and when the miserable inhabitants had no more to give, they plundered and burnt all the towns, so that thou mightest well walk a whole day's

journey nor ever shouldst thou find a man seated in a town, or its lands tilled.

"Then was corn dear, and flesh and cheese and butter, for there was none in the land. Wretched men starved with hunger; some lived on alms who had been erewhile rich; some fled the country; never was there more misery, and never acted heathens worse than these. At length they spared neither church nor churchyard, but they took all that was valuable therein, and then burned the church and all together. Neither did they spare the lands of bishops nor of priests, but they robbed the monks and the clergy, and every man plundered his neighbour as much as he could. If two or three men came riding to a town, all the township fled before them, and thought that they were robbers. The bishops and clergy were ever cursing them, but this to them was nothing, for they were all accursed, and forsworn, and reprobate.

"The earth bare no corn; you might as well have tilled the sea, for the land was all ruined by such deeds, and it was said openly that Christ and his saints slept. These things, and more than we can say, did we suffer during nineteen years because of our sins."

The conquest of Britain by the English contrasts favourably with the conquest of England by the Normans. The first was an open war of extermination, in which the inhabitants of the soil were beaten in successive battles, forced into the mountains of the West as the English came from the East, and no show of mercy was extended to them, for the English pagans had none to show. In the case of the Normans, there was a wily pretext for the invasion; false promises were made of governing the

people by their own laws, and then for more than a century there was nothing but rapine, murder, and foul play throughout the length and breadth of the land.

The language of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells the story but too well. The Norman influence succeeded in raising up a barrier of hatred between the two people that remained until the Normans ceased to be, and the English flourished over their graves. The few trumpery alterations in dress and manner, to which allusion has been made, were too superficial to be regarded as exponents of the national character, which triumphed over the Norman element more emphatically and more lastingly than any other conquest ever made. This part of English history has been wrongly read, for it was the English conquest of the Normans that was achieved.

The reformation of the monasteries was the chief work of the Conqueror in the way of improvement. Anglo-Saxon proclivities are not favourable to monastic rule; but there is nothing to be brought against the English which can be compared for a moment with the conduct of the Normans. Monastic institutions are always a source of trouble and of more disorder than they pretend to cure, so that the improvement of the monasteries was, after all, no good thing for England. They sucked the life's blood out of the people in succeeding ages, and though emphatically the seats of learning at the time, the learning they fostered, being for the most part Latin, was of no use to us as a nation, and was indeed only intended by monks for monks to read. Queer things they are, too, some of these monkish Latin works in prose and poetry! From the specimens preserved to

us, we may have cause for rejoicing that so many have perished; while the Saxon works, on the other hand, present us with a strength, a vigour, a flavour, an aroma, that will, I trust, prove invaluable by showing us whence our English freshness, heartiness, and hatred of vice come.

We are told that the Normans invented the feudal system. This again is a mistake. The system by which a lord holds his land of his king, returning certain service for the tenure, is Scandinavian all through. In Scandinavia the king was elected, being one of the royal family, and the yarl held his yarldom on condition of furnishing a certain number of armed men, horses, and arms for his king's wars. This custom was brought over by the Angles in the fifth century, and in the later "Anglo-Saxon" times we find the contributions to the king's wars kept up and very constantly referred to. "An eorl's heriot, or *her-geatu*, *i.e.*, contribution to the army, was four horses saddled and four horses not saddled, four helms, four byrnies (coats of mail), eight spears and shields, four swords, and two hundred mancuses of gold, which was twice a thane's heriot. To be an eorl was a dignity to which a thane might arrive, and even a ceorl."*

All through the so-called Anglo-Saxon period we discover nobility dependent on landed property, and the distinction in the laws between men as to their rank is given in language referring to their land. Thus, a twy hynd-man is equivalent to a ceorl (churl), while a twelf hynd-man is of the highest aristocracy. No thane could have less than five hides of land, and it is especially stated

* Sharon Turner's *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, vol. iii, book 8, chap. 6.

in the laws that "although a ceorl had a helm, a suit of armour, and a gold hilted-sword, if he had no land, the laws declare that he must still remain a ceorl." Besides this, there is some evidence to show that the title of Thane went with the land. It was, in fact, the same thing as the Norman baron, the Thane-land being equivalent to the Norman barony.

Thus we see that some of the very customs ascribed to the Normans were well known to our forefathers before the Normans ever went to Neustria.

Much has been said about the improvements in the arts under the Normans, but with the exception of their architecture, which was founded on that of the Saxons, I am at a loss to know *what* great improvements we owe to them. The drawings in their manuscripts are not better than those in the English MSS. of the time, and the finish is *greatly* inferior to that in the English MSS. Certainly there is more animation in the so-called Anglo-Saxon drawings than in those of the Normans. They tell the story better, and appeal to the imagination more vividly.

I am heterodox, I know, but any Englishman may judge for himself. The British Museum unfolds its countless treasures to the English people, and when they would hold commune with the mighty dead, let them, by the aid of the mystic manuscripts, call up the spirits of their forefathers, who will tell them that the improvements commonly attributed to the Normans were nothing more than the results of ordinary progress, and that these were in fact retarded, rather than accelerated, by the advent of the usurpers.

Lecture II.

THE ENGLISH.

LECTURE II.

THE ENGLISH.

PHILOLOGISTS have started various schemes for denoting the periods in the history of our English tongue. Some call the first period, from 450 to 1100, Anglo-Saxon; the second period, from 1100 to 1230, Semi-Saxon; from 1230 to 1330, Early English; from 1330 to 1500, Middle English; from 1500 to 1600, Later English; and from 1600 to the present day, Modern English. But besides being somewhat arbitrary, this system is unpleasant. What can be more barbarous than the expression Semi-Saxon? Again, what authority have we for calling the language of Alfred Anglo-Saxon? He calls it *English* (as I have had the pleasure already of pointing out), and he must be admitted to have been a better judge of what the name of his language was than we are who live a thousand years later.

Dr. Morris, in his excellent *Historic Outlines of English Accidence* (which ought to be in the possession of every English-speaking individual who can read), very properly classifies these forms of the language as English of the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth periods, subdividing the fifth into English from 1460 to 1520, and from 1520 to the present day.

For whatever names be given to the different phases

of its growth, the language in question is and remains English after all. Writers born in England of Norman strain tried hard to make an Anglo-Norman language, but they tried in vain. We *cannot* make a language. Language grows and develops, decays and is restored, just like any other phenomenon taken cognizance of by physical science, as the great master of the Science of Language, Max Müller, has shown.

Now although this is perfectly true as far as volition is concerned, although it is a fact that no monarch, not even our own beloved Queen, could change a word in the language by an effort of will; yet it is equally a fact that language is an exponent of the state of the people speaking it. Thus the foul ribaldry that wells out from the lips of the London rough is an exponent of the state of his mind, albeit he never invented a word of it. In the same great town of London you may hear the very rustle of angels' wings in the sweet sounds expressing the still sweeter thoughts of England's brightest womanhood.

The English heart could never be a Norman heart, so its pulsations became vocal in sympathetic tones as English as itself. "Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh" is a dictum the truth of which becomes vividly apparent when viewed by the light of linguistic science. That the Normans were more conquered by the Franks than we were by the Normans is evidenced in the unerring test of language. They became Frenchmen, while we never did; and although the French language and manners were imposed by force upon us, they did not thrive. The very act of trying to force a language on a nation was itself sufficient to make the indigenous form

of speech more hearty, more vigorous than ever. Imagine the consequence of such a proceeding nowadays. Suppose, after the siege of London, the successful Esquimaux should order us to resign the language of Shakespeare, and adopt their unctuous tongue. Should we, *could* we talk it? I trow not! The very children in the street would resist it; and though in public they might prattle a few words of the detested speech, *how* they would talk English in private. English people are very prone, even now, to copy foreigners as a matter of *chic* (as I borrow this word); but try to *force* them to use such expressions, or adopt such manners, as they assume for fashion's sake to please themselves, and see how the attempt would work.

Just so was the history of our Normanization. The weakness and the folly of Edward the Confessor turned the heads of many English who sought, as far as the outer man was concerned at least, to become Frenchmen. When once the screw was applied to *force* them to become Frenchmen, the old English stubbornness was roused, and the English language flourished all the more strongly for the attempted repression.

In the same way the customs of the Normans were rejected, and those of the English kept up. How the feeling against these tyrants showed itself may be seen by the English books of the twelfth century that have come down to us. Look at the *Brut*, a history of England, in pure English poetry, by a monk named Layamon. This poem is a very long one, extending over 32,233 lines in one of the texts, and 24,567 in the second, or more recent, text of the early part of the thirteenth century. And yet in these 56,800 lines Sir

Frederick Madden detects about 90 words of French origin in the combined texts, those in the earlier MS. being 50, and those in the second 40, in number.

This is a very small proportion to the number of words in so long a work, especially when we remember that the back bone of the poem is due more to Romance than to English originals. The author himself declares his poem to be compiled from three sources; namely, a book in English by Saint Bede; another in Latin by Saint Austin; and a third made by a French clerk named Wace. As he has adopted hardly anything from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, the only English book he refers to, we have the majority of his sources decidedly Romance. Under these circumstances the number of Romance words is remarkably small, and many of these are such as had been already used in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

Now, if, as some people think, the whole language of England had been Normanized, there would have been no occasion for an English version of the *Brut* in the twelfth century. It was not written for people who could not read, therefore there must have been a reading public sufficient to justify at least two "editions" of Layamon's *Brut*.

The truth is that the *Brut* is not a translation of Wace, but an English poem founded upon him, and employing a few expressions of the Frenchman's text, which were readily understood at the time, and either happened to suit the versification better, or were allowed to remain from carelessness on account of their being so well understood. In either case it is a strong argument against the Normanists, to find a poem so grandly English as the *Brut*, in the very zenith of the

"Norman" times. The celebrated Danish scholar, Grundtvig, says of the *Brut:* "that, tolerably well read as he is in the rhyming chronicles of his own country and of others, he has found Layamon's beyond comparison the most lofty and animated in its style, at every moment reminding the reader of the splendid phraseology of Saxon verse."*

Sir Frederic Madden very strongly points out the error, commonly indulged in, of supposing that the changes in the English in the twelfth century were due to Norman influence. He says, in his preface to his delightful edition of the *Brut*:—

"It will readily be admitted by those who have investigated the history of the English language, that the most obscure, and yet in many respects the most interesting, period of its progress, is that during which the Anglo-Saxon language, already, from the time of Edward the Confessor, predisposed to change, was at length broken up, and clothed with those new characteristics in which the germs of our modern tongue are found. That this important change was occasioned solely, or even in a large proportion, by the influence of the Norman invaders, is a proposition specious indeed, but wholly untenable; and it has been argued, with every appearance of probability, that the same effects would have been produced had William and his followers remained on their native soil.

"Assuming this to be true, it will necessarily follow that such an organic change in the structure of a language must have been very gradual,† and effected by certain and

* Preface to Layamon's *Brut*, by Sir Frederic Madden, pp. xxiii, xxiv. London 1847. † Preface to *Brut*, page 1.

determinate laws." In confirmation of this assertion, Sir Frederic refers, in a note, to Price's preface to Warton's *History of English Poetry*, who brings forward the fact "that every branch of the low German stock, from whence the Anglo-Saxon sprang, displays the same simplification in its grammar." This view of the question is confirmed also by Professor Latham, who adds, "that compared with the Icelandic, the Danish and Swedish do the same."*

My learned friend Dr. Morris, the eminent philologist, says: "Before the Norman Conquest the English language showed a tendency to substitute an analytical for a synthetical structure, and probably, had there been no Norman invasion, English would have arrived at the same simplification of its grammar as nearly every other nation of the low German stock has done."†

So much for the language. The *thought* of Layamon (a thing of much greater consequence) is English, and not French. There is no delight in indelicate allusions, no gloating over stories which would make even a modern divorce court blush for shame, no diabolical attempt to lower that respect for women which is a legacy to us from our stout Anglo-Saxon forefathers. In this important matter the *Brut* stands far above the Norman-French poems which have come down to us, and whose ribaldry affected our poetry, not only all through the Middle Ages, but down to a later time.

The Genius of Scandinavia, or, more broadly speaking, the Teutonic Genius, is opposed to the Romance Genius in every possible way; but the most emphatic distinction

* Preface to *Brut*, page 1.

† *Historic Outlines of English Accidence*, p. 49.

between North and South is to be found in the difference of treatment of woman in these two grand and opposing branches of the Aryan family.

In Scandinavia, woman was regarded as possessing a power, wanting in man, of direct communication with the gods. A conviction of the inadvisability of a given expedition uttered by a woman, would often be allowed to weigh against the combined wisdom of a whole conclave met in "Ting" or parliament; therefore women were, to the immense surprise of the Roman Tacitus, admitted to the councils of state. In religious matters there were ten priestesses to one priest, and the vala or prophetess was looked up to with an amount of awe and veneration as simple as it was genuine. On the testimony of Tacitus, vice and immorality were almost unknown, and were regarded with disgust and loathing by the stalwart race that overthrew Rome. To the fact that marriage was entered into at a comparatively late period, after the full development of the frame had been attained, and the character, as well as the nerve and muscle of the warrior had been duly proved and found to be of the sterling kind, Tacitus ascribes the gigantic height and indomitable courage of the whole German race. In fact, no Teutonic lady would accept the addresses of an untried warrior. The young hero with the white shield and no eagle's wings in his helmet had no chance with the fair sex when compared with the tried warrior.

When a grand expedition was planned, and the warriors of a little kingdom marched out, ascended their dragons and put to sea, they were accompanied by their priestesses, by the wives of the elder leaders, and,

in some cases, by their daughters. In colonising a new country they were forbidden all inter-marriages with the race subdued, which was, as a rule, exterminated.

When such an expedition left the fiords and bays of the "Nurse of Heroes"—the North—it was sometimes impossible for all the women and children to accompany the army, especially when the object of the expedition was an attack on some neighbouring petty king or yarl, in which case they were left behind. To guard and shield these dear ones was a holy office, and no one could be selected for it who had not given proofs of his prowess and skill. Thus to be left in charge of the women was no disgrace, inasmuch as the office could only be entrusted to a warrior, to a champion whose valour and probity were beyond the reach of any suspicion.

Mother and wife were holy words, while the name for the collection of sacred myths which has come down to us as the "Edda", signifies the "Grandmother", a term of endearment combined with veneration which in itself offers a striking proof of the purity and respect felt for woman by our ancestors.

Contrast this with the ribaldry of Norman romances, with the impurity of the tales and gestes of the *trouvères* and minstrels. We may give the songs of the *Edda* to any English maiden to study, but not the foul immoralities of the Norman school, which, unfortunately for us, crept into our literature, and thence spread like the plague all round.

We should be thankful that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries few of the English portion of the population could read. The Norman barons had their

minstrels, who sang these foul songs to them, and the Norman priors insisted on Latin as the only tongue worth reading amongst the monks. Yet still the plague-spot spread, and affected all classes; so that in the fourteenth century, when the English had thrown off the Norman yoke, the shameful taint remained. It was, however, a disease rather than a part of the frame, and our hearty English nature has, I hope, with other disorders, been able to fling this away. That the few Normans surrounding the king spoke only Norman-French, and hated and despised us, was a blessing to the nation; firstly, because the generality of the people understood nothing of their ribaldry; and secondly, because many good men and true, already despising such thoughts, would learn to hate them all the more for being couched in the detested tongue. So that, although the literature of England was not so scrupulously pure in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it was nothing like such a mass of corruption as that of the Romance people.

Another great source of oppression and wrong was the monastic system, which, by making lawful wedlock a thing opposed to religion, opened a door for all kinds of impropriety of conduct, and, as it were, at a blow hurled woman from her throne. What resulted from this? The monasteries and convents of England were the hot-beds of vice and profligacy. So far did this reach, that all kinds of domestic evils were traceable, not only to the monks, but to the clergy. Of this, proof enough is furnished by the stories of the fourteenth century, of which many are found in Chaucer. But all this was un-English, and brought forth a "Bitter Cry" in the vision of —not the priest,

not the pope, but the "ploughman," who cried out against Romance devilishness, as presented under the forms of Norman priest and scoundrel monk. *The Vision of Piers Ploughman* is the grandest land-mark in the history of our race; while the successes of Edward the Third in his French wars have nothing more to do with it than to give the English a fresh cause of dislike to Romance feeling and Romance influence.

It has been said that the English nation is a mixture of the Saxon, the Briton, and the Norman. But modern research has shown that the Scandinavian principles were opposed to intermarriage with non-Odinic people. The English cut down the Britons, but did not marry them. They viewed the alliance with Vortigern with contempt, finding that Rowena had made a *mésalliance*. But the hatred to the Normans was fiercer and more settled than any national feeling that has existed in any other nation. From all the MSS. we find that the Normans were kept, not at arm's length, but at spear's length, by the people. Their number was quite insignificant compared to the bulk of the population, so that even if they had intermarried with the English, as a rule the influence would have been but as a pail of water to the North Sea. But their intermarriages were the exception, and *not* the rule. Their own over-bearing self-assumption, and the national hatred of the Norman name, effectually barred sufficient intermixture to affect the national characteristics which emphatically stamp us as English people.

There are eight MSS. of *Piers Ploughman's Vision* in the British Museum. But the one selected by Wright for his text is at Trinity College, Cambridge (marked B. 15,

17). Professor Skeat has, in his most exhaustive and invaluable edition, given two texts and a delightful account of the various MSS. and their respective merits. Every man, woman, and child ought to possess the two volumes of the Early English Text Society's publications which embrace this interesting addition to our knowledge of the footsteps of our forefathers.

Few books were ever so popular, and its popularity continued, for it "was printed by the reformers, and received with so much favour, that no less than three editions are said to have been sold in one year. Another edition was printed at the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and it appears to have been much read in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and even at the beginning of the seventeenth."*

The book is sterling English, and the poetry alliterative, throwing off what the *Rejected Addresses* calls "the gewgaw fetters of rhyme invented by the monks to enslave the people";† and certainly alliterative verse speaks directly to the Teutonic heart, while there is generally a stiffness in rhyme which, unless treated by a great master, renders poetry too much of a jingle to be pleasant. Alliteration appeals to us at once in many proverbs, and in a still greater number of customary phrases, such as "rough and ready," "good as gold," "frank and free," and

* See Introduction to *The Vision and Creed of Piers Ploughman*, edited from a contemporary manuscript by Thomas Wright, M.A., F.S.A. London: John Russell Smith, 1856.

† *Rejected Addresses; or the new Theatrum Poetarum*, by James and Horace Smith. See *The Hampshire Farmer's Address* (William Cobbett).

the like. Such a line as "And foremost fighting fell," has great music for an English ear.

The grand features of this great work are its vigorous assertion of English feeling, the strong recognition of the value of religion, and the utter refusal to submit to the dictation of a vicious and corrupt priesthood. The cry uttered is piteous, and shows what sufferings were still being endured by the lower and middle classes from the abominable Romance invention of monasticism, and the result of the popular feeling throughout the land was an attack on the monasteries.

Wright, in his introduction to his edition of the poem, says: "During the successive reigns of the three first Edwards, the public mind in England was in a state of constant fermentation. On the one hand the monks, supported by the Popish church, had become an incubus upon the country. Their corruptness and immorality were notorious: the descriptions of their vices given in the satirical writings of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries exceeds even the bitterest calumnies of the age of Rabelais, or the reports of the Commissioners of Henry the Eighth. The populace, held in awe by the imposing appearance of the Roman church, and by the religious belief which had been instilled into them from their infancy, were opposed to the monks and clergy by a multitude of personal griefs and jealousies; these frequently led to open hostility, and in the chronicles of those days we read of the slaughter of monks and the burning of abbeys by the insurgent townspeople or peasantry. At the same time, while the monks in revenge treated the commons with contempt, there were numerous people

who, under the name of Lollards, and other such appellations—led sometimes by the love of mischief and disorder, but more frequently by religious enthusiasm—went abroad among the people, preaching not only against the corruptions of the monks, but against the most vital doctrines of the church of Rome, and, as might be expected, they found abundance of listeners."*

The English people had lost neither heart nor tongue in the interval between William and Wycliffe, a period of three hundred years. The strong corn was growing that had been trodden down, while the load of Norman vice acted like manure on a field, for which the ripened grain throve all the better, bursting through at last uncontaminated, nor only so, but healthier for the treatment undergone. The language retains the *en* in the infinitive mood, and the plurals of the present and imperfect indicative. The charming opening runs thus:—"In a Somer Seson, when Soft was the Sonne. I Shoop me into Shroudes. As I a Sheep were. In Habite as an Heremite: un-Holy of werkes. Went Wide in this World: Wonders to here. Ac on a May Morwening. On Malverne hilles. Me be-Fel a Ferly Of Fairye methought. I Was Wery for-Wandred and Wente me to reste. Under a Broad Bank by a Bournes side. And as I Lay and Lened And Loked on the watres, I Slombred into Slepyng It Sweyed so murye."

The same linguistic forms may be seen in Wycliffe. I take at random the fifth verse of the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark as an example:—"And alle men of Jerusalem wenten out to him, and al the cuntree of

* Wright's *Piers Plowman*, Introduction, vii.

Judee, and weren baptized of him in the flood of Jordan knowleching her synnes."

The parallel passage in Anglo-Saxon of the end of the tenth century is:—"And to him ferde eall Judeisce rice and ealle Hierosolima-ware; end wæron fram him gefullode on Jordenes flode, hyra synna and-detende."

A glance will show that it is the same stout form of speech with the addition of two foreign words, *country* and *baptize*, which do not interfere with the progress and life of the language, but stand forth, as it were, independent of the change, thus forming a pretty illustration of the state of the English majority with the Norman foreigners standing amidst them, but evidently not being of them.

Having shown you how the English mind stubbornly resisted Norman influence by reference to these precious documents, I shall now call your attention to what may be more popularly regarded as *history*. To us as English people it is a matter of the most perfect indifference whether William I died in Normandy or Northampton, whether William Rufus was shot by Walter Tyrrel or drank himself to death. The quarrels in Henry the First's time between himself and his brother Robert can only disgust us as being a disgraceful feud brought on by disgraceful conduct, but of no interest to us except in showing us the utter unworthiness of the ruling race. The wars between his daughter and Stephen taught the English to curse the very name of Norman, but had no other effect upon our history. Henry the Second was the first Norman who showed any feeling for the English, and he manifested his good will by causing all the castles

that had been built to be destroyed. That was a little bit of English history, and his conquest of Ireland was another, for which we have so many reasons to rejoice at the present day! But the revolting quarrels between him and his sons, and their squabbles with one another, are matters of no consequence to us and our history. To me the greatest interest attaching to his reign is the political squib having reference to him, and describing him as an "old woman", thus—

> "There was an old woman, and she had three sons,
> Geoffry, Dicky, and John.
> Geoffry was hanged, and Johnny was drowned,
> While Dicky was lost and could never be found;
> So there was an end of the old woman's sons,
> Geoffry, Dicky, and John."

Historically, this squib gives an incorrect account of the fate of these worthies, but as a token of the respect paid to the reigning family it is invaluable.

But if all these disgraceful "family rows" are not the History of England, what are we to do with Hume and Smollett, Keightly, Henry, and others? Keep them as works of reference, by all means, but read the popular songs, even the Latin squibs of Walter Mapes. Turn over the MSS. in the British Museum, and study the manners and customs of our ancestors, portrayed there as ours have been by Leach in our day. And for the deeds of the English during this French usurpation, read the grand story of Hereward the Saxon and his band of friends.

As it may be new to many, I will give a short sketch of the life of this hero, taken from the account furnished

by Wright, to whom we are so much indebted for popularising mediæval archæology.

"Hereward was the son of Leofric, Earl of Chester and Mercia, and of that Lady Godiva whose touching act of self-negation will never be forgotten as long as the town of Coventry stands. His boyhood and youth were full of adventure and peril. He was dreaded by everybody for his strength and utter fearlessness. At last he became so turbulent that his father begged the Confessor to banish him the country. With the marvellous adventures of Hereward during his exile we have nothing to do at present, but many of them took place in the kingdom of Cornwall. He was mixed up with a most interesting love-story, relating to a princess of Cornwall and a prince of Ireland, in which Hereward performed wonders, and on the marriage of the lovers accompanied them to Ireland, whence he returned to England with certain other Englishmen, his companions in arms. It appears that in the midst of his successes he had heard of the foul chance that had befallen England.

"He had married a beautiful and noble lady named Turfrida, whom he entrusted to the care of his tried friends, the two Siewards, and arriving one calm evening in 1068, he entered as a stranger the village of Brunne in Lincolnshire, the chief manor of the noble Earl Leofric. He was on foot, for the English preferred walking, as the Normans loved riding. He had one attendant with him, lightly armed like himself. He demanded hospitality of a Saxon knight, one of Leofric's retainers, who gave him a true English welcome. But the faces of the inmates of the house bore marks of sorrow and dejection, and, in

answer to his questions, they told him that their lord was dead, that a Norman had been sent to usurp his possessions, and that they were on the point of being delivered over to the rapacity of the invaders. In the course of conversation it came out that a younger brother of Hereward had been slain in defending his mother. The wretches had killed the boy, and fixed his head ignominiously above the doorway.

"Hereward listened to all this in silence. No person had recognised him, and the family retired to rest, leaving the guest sleepless and thoughtful on his bed, until suddenly the distant sounds of music, and singing, and shouts of applause burst upon his ear. He sprang from his couch, roused a serving man of the house, and inquiring the meaning of the tumult, was informed that the Norman intruders were celebrating the entry of their lord into the patrimony of the youth whom they had murdered the previous day.

"The stranger put on his arms, threw about him a large black cloak, which concealed him from observation, and with his companion, similarly dressed, proceeded through the village to the place of boisterous revelry. There the first object which met his eyes was the ghastly head, which he took down, kissed, and wrapped in a cloth, and then the two adventurers placed themselves in the dark shade within the doorway, whence they had a full view of the interior of the hall.

"The Normans were scattered round a blazing fire, most of them overcome with drunkenness, and lying down with their heads in the laps of their women. In the midst of the hall a *jongleur*, or minstrel, was chaunting ribald

songs against the English, ridiculing their manners in coarse dances and ludicrous gestures. He was uttering some indecent jests against the youth whom they had slain, when one of the women, a native of Flanders, interrupted him, saying, 'Forget not that the boy has a brother named Hereward who is famed for his bravery throughout the country whence I come, if he were here, things would wear a different aspect to-morrow.'

"The new lord of the house, indignant at this boldness of speech, raised his head, saying:—'I know the man well, and his wicked deeds, which would have brought him to the gallows, had he not saved his neck by flight; he dare not now appear anywhere this side of the Alps.'

"The minstrel, or ribald, took the hint, and commenced a series of verses far from complimentary to Hereward, when his skill as an improvisatore was cut short, as indeed he was himself, by a sweeping blow from Hereward's sword, which took his head off. Now began a scene of slaughter in which the Normans, taken by surprise and almost unarmed, fell beneath the sword of Hereward, while his companion stood at the door and cut down all those who attempted to seek safety in flight. The heads of the Norman lord and fourteen of his knights were quickly raised over the doorway in place of that of the youth whom they had murdered.

"When it became known that Hereward was back again in arms, the Normans who had settled in that neighbourhood fled in dismay, and the injured Saxons rose on every side, and hastened to join his banner. At first Hereward checked the zeal of his countrymen, but he selected a strong body of his kinsmen and family adherents, and

with them he attacked and slew such of the Norman invaders as had been bold enough to remain on his paternal estates.

"The Saxons always received knighthood from the clergy, and not from superior lords, so Hereward, who had not yet been knighted, went to his friend Brand, the Saxon Abbot of Peterborough, from whom he received the honour. He was attacked by a Norman baron who had been sent against him, but he killed the Norman, and completely routed his followers. He then dispersed his own, promising them to return at the end of a year, and acquainted them with a signal by which his arrival should be known. He then started for Flanders.

"At the appointed time in 1069, Hereward returned, bringing with him his companions in arms, the two Siewards and other Saxons who had joined him during his exile. Nor did he leave behind him his beautiful wife the Lady Turfrida. Finding that his paternal estates had, since his last visit, remained unoccupied by the Normans, who found it inconvenient to attempt the further Normanisation of the district, he proceeded direct to Brunne, where some of the bravest of his kinsmen and friends were on the look out for him. Then he made the signal which had been agreed on by setting fire to three villas on the highest part of Brunnes wold. He was soon at the head of a gallant band of Saxon outlaws, who crowded to him in the forest, to which he had retired to await the result of his signal.

"The historian gives a long list of the English chiefs who joined the standard of the hero; but they were not the only important people who took up arms against the

Normans, for many ecclesiastics were among the numbers of the patriots. The monks of Ely, with their abbot Thurstan, fortified themselves in their almost inaccessible island among the wild fens, and were there joined by Archbishop Stigand, Earls Morcar, Edwin, and Tosti, where they were besieged by the powerful Earl Warren, who was cleverly defeated by Hereward, with hardly any loss on his side, although the Normans were discomfited with great slaughter."

At last King William himself was obliged to attempt the siege of Ely, and was twice defeated. On the last occasion, he had so narrow an escape that he fled with an arrow sticking into the rings of his chain mail, and that, too, *in the back of the armour.*

One Norman knight alone reached the Isle of Ely, and he was immediately seized and carried to Hereward, who received him kindly, kept him a few days, showing him the resources of the place, and the mode of life of its defenders. He then gave him his liberty, on condition that he should give the king a faithful account of all he had seen. The knight strictly fulfilled his promise, and the Norman monarch was beginning to talk of offering terms to the English patriots. This he would have done but for the hatred borne by Earl Warren and another powerful baron, Ivo Taillebois, whose hatred of the English knew no bounds. To them the lengthened struggle was due, and the camp at Ely held out against William's armies for three years, when at last it was surprised through treachery.

Hereward, however, escaped, and was soon at the head of another band of patriots, teaching the king that

the loss of Ely had not subdued the English spirit, and the war was continued until Hereward was induced to make peace with William and actually to go to court, where he was received with distinction. After this things went wrong with him, for he never could keep peace with the Norman barons, by whose treachery he was at last slain. Geoffrey Gaimar, who tells the story of his death observes: —"It was commonly supposed that had there been only four such men, the Normans would have been long ago driven out of the land."

The succeeding Norman reigns, as given in our books of history, are rather histories of Normandy than of England, save where time is given to long accounts of the Crusades. But the Anglo-Norman writers, excepting the historians who wrote in Latin and not in Norman-French, and from whose works most of our histories of these evil days have been compiled, are forgotten and uncared for, while the *Chronicle*, the *Brut*, the English *Lives of Saints*, the numerous works existing in the English of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, are more and more sought after as time wears on. In studying the literary remains of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, we are struck with the vigour and manliness of the style as well as with the interesting nature of the information conveyed. The songs and political ballads all through tell a similar story to that told by Hereward the Saxon, and our old friend Robin Hood stands forward in the same light. The English people, as a race, are remarkably amenable to law and order. At the present day one policeman, unarmed save with the authority given him by the law, can do more in a crowd of English people than a whole troop

of mounted and armed gendarmes in other countries, because *we* love law and order—the *we* including the great unwashed. Therefore the great popularity of Robin Hood does not arise from his being an outlaw, in the sense of a modern ticket-of-leave man, but from his having stood up against Norman oppression, boldly breasting the usurpers, and doing wonders for the English party.

Robin Hood had a special grudge against the abbots and the wealthy barons of his time. He was celebrated for taking from the rich and giving to the poor. Certainly, a dangerous principle to recognise now-a-days, when the Normans have passed away, and we are all English. But then, in the time of Richard the First, when the English were smarting under the Norman lash, the conduct of such a man becomes heroic. A popular defender of the nation's rights, resigning the comforts of home to assert the manliness of the English race, despite its folly in admitting the Norman, is a figure in history that stands higher than any usurper of the whole fell brood.

But our friend Dr. Dryasdust tells us that Robin Hood was a myth, that he never lived; that Little John, Scarlett, Friar Tuck, and the gentle Marian were inventions of the poet's brain at that time. I will accept the learned doctor's objection, admit the weak place in my argument, and grant (only for the sake of argument, however) that my favourite heroes never were men of thewes and sinews. What were they then? They were the voice of the English people crystallised into form as of living men. The wrongs were there to redress, and the ideal champion arose.

I firmly believe in Robin Hood and his exercise with

the bow and arrow, which had not been so much cultivated by the English as by the Normans. And that is the reason why the weapon retained its English name, while the *bowman* practised until he became an *archer*. If the bow had not been English, or not of English origin, we should have been talking of *arcs* and *fletches*, instead of bows and arrows. We became *archers* because at one time the Norman archers were better than our bowmen, and we worked hard until we excelled them; and at Cressy and Poictiers beat the French with their own weapons.

The Norman wasted villages for his pleasure. The New Forest in Hampshire was the work of the first Norman tyrant, and there his son fell.

> "Where his father bade the wild stag hide,
> By Tyrrel's arrow the Rufus died!"

And every cloth yard shaft that whizzed through merry Sherwood was a Tyrrel's arrow against the Norman. The debt we owe to the Robin Hood thought (whether he ever lived or not) is immense, and his history, whether poetic fiction or Dryasdust fact, is more the history of England than all the splendid little bits of fighting executed by Richard the First in the Holy Land.

When a man becomes a nation's darling, and his name lives through ages as a bright and shining star, we may be sure that there is something in him that makes him a representative man; that is to say, a formula that represents some element in the people; and the element represented by Robin Hood is a great fact, a greater fact than any Norman king.

A king should be, and must be, the exponent of his

people. He is not a simple "I myself, I," but he is We. In other words, he is the people. Now the Norman kings were not the people, they were foes to keep them down; therefore their history is not our history, while the tales of Hereward and Robin Hood are.

Then arises the question, what is the history of our race, and where are we to learn it? The answer is, that the history of our race is the tale told in successive ages of the struggle for the freedom of thought, combined with a love of order; and where we are to learn it is in such storehouses of the learning of past ages as the manuscript libraries in the British Museum, at the Bodleian at Oxford, at Corpus Christi at Cambridge, and others.

In the British Museum we have manuscripts from the grand old Beowulf parchment, telling of the myths of our remote ancestors, down to the folio volume of Bishop Percy, containing his charming collection of songs and ballads. From these glorious sources you may draw the true history of the English race, in spite of the Norman historian who wrote a feudal roll to please his lord. In these interesting relics we trace the footsteps of our forefathers with inerring safety through the tangled maze that was spread for them.

After mastering *Beowulf*, the first thing to be done is to read the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, of which there are no less than four different manuscripts in the British Museum. Then refer to the exquisite photographs of the Bayeux tapestry, which are to be seen in the same department. By this means you will be able to trace the various events in the true history of the people until their slumber under the sleepy Confessor. While this is done, other

documents may be consulted, in which the representations of various articles of dress, furniture, arms, armour, ecclesiastical and other ornaments abound, which will enable you to fill in the outline of the *Chronicle* with the colours of nature. Take *Beowulf* for the description of an early English house, then study the relics in the Anglo-Saxon room, till, following the footsteps of your forefathers, you hear the clang of their chain mail on the gay pavement, and see them rise from the tomb in their habits as they lived.

When you have exhausted the tapestry and its teachings, turn to Alfric's version of Genesis in the Cotton MS. marked Claudius B. iv, where you will see, as a representation of Abraham's feast on the birth of his child, one of the best pictures of an early English table that can well be imagined. There you learn that they had spotless table-cloths, dainty knives and spoons, wonderful bread baskets of silver, and various drinking vessels. You will see how the cooks present the roasted meat on the spit, and how the utensils in the Anglo-Saxon Room of the British Museum were used. These English things are not done away with and abrogated by the visit of the Normans, and the manuscripts will teach us that the fashions which they introduced were, after all, only modifications of the originals on which the English dress and fashions were founded, and passed away with them like an ugly dream. The older forms returned in greater vigour, like the language; and we find our ancestors emerging from the Norman mist with their ancient vigour, and preserving even their dress and customs. In a manuscript of the fourteenth century in the British Museum (Additional

MS. No. 12,228), we have a dinner table very like that of the genuine early English times. Only one side of the table is occupied by the guests, so that the officiating domestics may have room to act. There is another MS. (Reg. 2, B. vii), where some ladies are represented with the wimple and over-slop of the eighth century, though the MS. is of the fourteenth. There are other ladies in the same MS. similarly dressed; in fact, at first sight, we might take them all for very early Anglo-Saxons.

The evidence of the manuscripts in the national treasury, the British Museum, tends to show that the Norman occupation of the English throne did *not* Normanise the English, that the change in the language has been independent of Norman influence, that *our* manners and customs remained English, although the Normans, being more addicted to writing and drawing than we, represented Normans rather than English persons in their pictures and lays, so that the history of the English people is not to be sought for in their limnings or verse. The two nations never mixed, but lived on in parallel lines until the Normans died out, or were swamped by the majority of the inhabitants of England being English.

I have shown in other places that the observances of certain customs, the Yuletide festival, Easter, the Ember week, Ash Wednesday, the names of our days, the peculiar and interesting use made of the mistletoe, the veneration paid to the holly, and more such usages generally referred to Christian influences, are all pagan English, and are as strong in us now as they were two thousand years ago, although they have been baptized with Christian names

and so received into the church. The manuscripts and other valuable traces of the lives of our forefathers will establish the fact that other things more essential to the English character were preserved, like the creatures in the ark, in spite of the flood which threatened extinction to us as a nation.

We have been from the beginning bitter foes to the Romance element in the world. We and our kindred Goths became the apostles of freedom, and hurled Imperial Rome to the dust. When she sent missionaries to England she made converts not conquests. We were the first of her converts not previously subdued by the sword. And we took her dicta *cum grano salis;* we refused to admit the doctrine of transubstantiation, even in the earliest times. The celebrated Homily of Ælfric insists upon the symbolic, rather than the material, value of the sacrament, and here joins issue with Rome at once.

This very homily was reproduced, and twice issued from the press between 1566 and 1570, with a view to prove that the doctrine then established was not an innovation but a revival of the doctrine maintained by the Church in England before the time of the Norman Conquest. Thus the very Reformation itself was as English a piece of history as any event recorded in Sharon Turner.

The hatred of monasticism lasted as long as there were any monks to hate, and descriptions of their vices fill our literature. Skelton indulges his vigorous satire on the subject, and his rattling verses are as bitter against the mal-practices of churchmen as the alliterative lines of the *Plowman.* For the Englishman loves to think for himself

on all matters, whether political or religious; he is unwilling to be dictated to, though he is ready to be taught; and as the coercive measures of the Normans led his mind to fly back, like a strong spring released, to his more ancient manners and customs, so the attempt to coerce his religious belief sent him at a leap back to the tenth century for support of his own opinion. He was as much an Englishman in the sixteenth century as he had been in the sixth.

But, unhappily, the vices of the Normans were not so easily got rid of, and they certainly have done us harm, though they have not made Normans of us. It is not so bad as that. And as for the remark that the number of Latin and French words in English prove that the language is mixed, Max Müller has shown that the mere addition in any given form of speech, of some words to its vocabulary, does not change either the structure or the genius of the language at all. The greater number of Latin words which we use have crept in since the beginning of the sixteenth century, when it was a fad among the learned to write in Latin, a custom still perceptible in our medical prescriptions. As we know more we shall get wiser, and throw these technical terms away; for people are finding out that the English language is something to be proud of, and something to know, and suits but ill with the borrowed trumpery of the south, which has hidden us as it were in a fog, without actually destroying us.

"In 1349 boys ceased to learn their Latin through the medium of French, and in 1362 (the 36th year of Edward III) it was directed by Act of Parliament that all plead-

ings in the law courts should henceforth be conducted in English, because, it is stated in the preamble to the Act, French was become much unknown in the realm."* A colleague of mine at Moscow pointed out to me a passage in Chaucer, who, writing a little later on, expresses his regret at being unable to write in French, "because he was an Englishman". The same delightful poet tells us, when speaking of the Prioress,

> "And Frenche she spake ful fayer and fetisly,
> After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe.
> For Frenche of Paris was to her unknowe."

I do not think that the best London boarding-school of the nineteenth century could have done better than that! His knight is a perfect Englishman, and all his characters in that most refreshing pilgrimage are as English as though they had been sketched by Alfred himself or Thackeray.

So the boasted Norman influence dwindles down to the effect produced on the minds of a certain corrupt clique that supported a foreign court, whose progress towards decay was no part of the history of England. So early as the fourteenth century we find it passed away. Although the models and sources of the tales, both of Chaucer and Gower, are of the Romance stock, the treatment and the sentiment are perfectly English.

The fifteenth century cleared away whatever might have lingered as un-English in the social atmosphere; the French wars made us more anti-Gallican than ever; while the Wars of the Roses, though forming a sharp remedy to a

* Morris's *Historic Outlines of English Accidence*, p. 31.

great evil, brought men's minds to the consideration of their own national wants, and led to the downfall of the incongruous system of the great baronial houses.

After this storm we find the English mind as strong as ever. We get a Skelton, a More, a Wyatt, and a Surrey, all sterling English writers; and when the Reformation comes, the English authorities of the church in the ninth century are made to support the new Church of England in the sixteenth.

English throughout, from the far back home in Angeln to the pleasant homes of England of to-day, we read the nation's history in its love of simple, trusting faith, quiet strong sense, a solemn honour for the holy name of woman, and a deference to the abstract power of the law.

Our mythology has been suppressed by the learned Latinists, and the impure systems of Greece and Rome substituted for it. But have they crushed it? The names of our week days, of most of our festivals—Yule, Eostra, Ash Wednesday, the Ember week, Lent, the cock-worship on Shrove Tuesday—are answers to this question. Even the very paganism of our English sires lives on in half-Christian dress.

Our jury is Scandinavian English, and neither Roman nor French. Our so-called Saxon laws live on in many legal practices; our representative assembly of the estates of the realm is almost without change, the same thing that it was even before the advent of Christianity, consisting now, as it did then, of king, lords, and freemen. We, of all the nations of Europe, retain the Scandinavian Yarl in our Earl; and finally, we alone have maintained the old Scandinavian right for each man to speak his

mind openly and freely, whether the assembly be called parliament or *ting*.

We may see by the very faint sketch thus crudely given, that the history of England, like all history, like individual life, is, as the Swedish poet Tegnér says, "from the very first a conflict—the fiercest battle is its youth."

Our battle has been that of the most pure of the Teutonic stock against the vicious tendencies of the Romance school. We have never been conquered, but we have swallowed up and thoroughly got rid of the supposed conquerors of the race; and now that we are at last beginning to learn English, we shall discover by its means that we are as uncompromisingly English now as we were in A.D. 450.

Lecture III.

THE MONK.

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THE MONK.

FEW works on the history of our race devote sufficient space to the consideration of the influence for good or ill that has been exercised by the clergy, including under that term both the actual priesthood and the less prominent, though not less active, recluses known to us as monks. But, notwithstanding the neglect with which they have been treated by historians, they have been important agents in producing most of the chief events of history, especially in what are called the dark ages, when the power of the Church of Rome was paramount in Europe.

The influence of the Church, however, was gradual, although mighty. There was no sudden rupture, no breaking down of firmly established barriers in the life and heart of the people. The course of the Church was far more sure and certain. In England her doctrines were received with extreme caution, and after mature deliberation. The early fathers were at first scared from their mission. St. Augustine actually turned back, and demanded of Pope Gregory "that they should not be compelled to undertake so dangerous, toilsome, and uncertain a journey. The Pope, in reply, sent them a hortatory epistle, persuading them to proceed in the work

of the Divine word, and rely on the assistance of the Almighty."*

Amongst the superstitions of the Scandinavian and, more broadly speaking, Teutonic paganism, was the belief that the spells of witchcraft were dissolved by water; hence the practice of fighting duels on islands, so that should either combatant be supernaturally protected by amulet or spell, the charm should be broken by the surrounding water. This belief was prevalent in the North of England even in our own day. Burns, in *Tam o' Shanter*, apostrophising "Meg", the spirited mare bestrode by the hero, says:—

> "Now do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
> And gain the key-stane o' the brigg!
> There at them thou thy tail may toss,
> A running stream they dare-na cross!"

They being the witches from whom Tam is flying.

This feeling is genuinely pagan, and was the cause for which the pagan king of Kent, Ethelbert, received the fathers in the island of Thanet, where they were commanded to remain until he should have decided what to do with them. It has been supposed, on excellent grounds, that Bertha, the wife of this king of Kent, had already softened his heart and prepared him to receive this mission kindly, for she was a Frank and a Christian. The fathers were treated with great humanity, and Bede says: "When he (Augustine) had sat down, pursuant to the king's commands, and preached to him and his attendants there present the word of life, the king answered thus: 'Your words and promises are very fair, but as

* Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, chap. xxiii.

they are new to us, and of uncertain import, I cannot approve of them so far as to forsake that which I have followed with the whole English nation. But because you are come from far into my kingdom, and, as I conceive, are desirous to impart to us those things which ye believe to be true, and most beneficial, we will not molest you, but give you favourable entertainment, and take care to supply you with your necessary sustenance ; nor do we forbid you to preach and gain as many as ye can to your religion.' Accordingly, he permitted them to reside in his city of Canterbury, which was the metropolis of all his dominions, and, pursuant to his promise, besides allowing them sustenance, did not refuse them liberty to preach."

Canterbury thus became the centre of Christian learning, as it was officially the centre of English government, for the pagan king Ethelbert was Bretwalder, or supreme king of the English. Augustine was not consecrated as Archbishop of London or of Canterbury, but by the general title of the Bishop of the English (*Anglorum Episcopus*), that he might be at liberty to fix his seat in whatever part of the country he pleased. Bede informs us, that "there was, on the east side of the city, a church dedicated to the honour of St. Martin, built whilst the Romans were still in the island, wherein the Queen Bertha who, as has been said before, was a Christian, used to pray. In this they first began to meet, to sing, to pray, to say mass, to preach, and to baptise, till the king, being converted to the faith, allowed them to preach openly, and build or repair churches in all places."*

* *Ecclesiastical History*, Book I, chap. xxvi.

In chapter xxxiii of the first book of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, the venerable historian speaks as follows :—

"Augustine, having his episcopal see granted him in the royal city, as has been said, and being supported by the king, recovered therein a church, which he was informed had been built by the ancient Roman Christians, and consecrated it in the name of our holy Saviour, God and Lord, Jesus Christ, and there established a residence for himself and his successors. He also built a monastery not far from the city to the eastward, in which, by his advice, Ethelbert erected from the foundation the church of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, and enriched it with several donations ; wherein the bodies of the same Augustine and of all the Bishops of Canterbury, and of the Kings of Kent, might be buried. However, Augustine himself did not consecrate that church, but Laurentius, his successor.

"The first abbot of that monastery was the priest Peter, who, being sent ambassador to France, was drowned in a bay of the sea which is called Amfleat, and privately buried by the inhabitants of the place; but Almighty God, to show how deserving a man he was, caused a light to be seen over his grave every night, till the neighbours who saw it, perceiving that he had been a holy man that was buried there, inquiring who and from whence he was, carried away the body and interred it in the church in the city of Boulogne, with the honour due to so great a person."

The church built by Augustine is now the Cathedral Church at Canterbury; but the present structure, although ancient, is of a date long subsequent to the age of St.

Augustine. The monastery, not far from the city, was subsequently called St. Augustine's Abbey.

Such is the first account which I am able to give you of the erection of monasteries in England. As such, I quote it, because it notices that the first abbot was a priest, from which doubtless the custom descended that the abbots were priests, the monks being regarded as laymen, although under vows of holy life.

For as soon as the love of Christianity spread, men were found who, for the sake of the faith, were willing to renounce their worldly position and retire to some spot where they could devote themselves entirely to the contemplation of spiritual matters. Of these many collected into societies cut off from the world, to pass their lives in devotion; others lived alone, serving God, as they thought, by holding no communion with His creatures.

These persons, not having the regular education fitting them for the priestly office, and merely retiring from this world's worry to gain some idea of the peace of the next, were called monks, from the Low Latin *monachus*, derived from the Greek *monachos*, from *monos*, alone.

Of these there were three special classes, which may be ranged in the following order:—*Cenobites*, those who lived in common in a monastery under a single ruler; secondly, *Anchorets*, or *Eremites*, or such as lived in solitude; and thirdly, *Sarabaitæ*, or monks living under a relaxed rule, and wandering about in different places, supporting themselves on alms bestowed on them for their sanctity.

The state of society in pagan England at the time of the advent of the good father Augustine was such as to make it very difficult for men not endowed with great wealth to

study at all. The knowledge of the Runes and their teaching had become already, since the older time, less and less spread, and was indeed confined to the priesthood, the military chiefs, and the kings. For them it was necessary to decipher the messages conveyed by heralds on the rune-staff, to carve runes on the breast at the approach of death in peace, and to be able to read the inscriptions on the Bauta-stones or monuments erected to the dead chiefs of their race. The country was rich in cause of discord; for although the octarchy was merging more and more into monarchy, there were yet remains of the old clan feeling in each of the kingdoms. There was a Bretwalder who was a sort of emperor, but there were still kings below him. There was no king of England in our modern sense of the term, and the only occupation for a gentleman was war.

Under such circumstances it was a wholesome institution that enabled a man, endowed with the capability of using his brain more than his fist, to think rather than to act. And to the institution of such orders of Monks we owe in fact all that we possess of the mighty literature of the past, and of the history of our own forefathers.

Strange stories are told us of the experiences of the early recluses, who were for the most part of the order of St. Benedict. They claimed to have been tempted by the arch-fiend himself, to have wrestled with him, and overcome the most terrible temptations. And these brave solitaries, who, alone and single-handed, dared contests, in the reality of which they in many cases certainly believed themselves, became the worthy successors, in a new cause, of the champions of Odin, who fought with and subdued

the weird monsters that in the old time threatened supernatural dangers from flood and field and fell.

As a very fair example of this class of literature, and one highly illustrative of the thought of the early Christian period with us, and the ideas inspiring a hermit, I shall give you a very brief account of the doings of the hermit of Crowland, St. Guthlac. The account of this man's life was originally written in Latin, but there are two Anglo-Saxon versions of the story. The Latin text is by a man named Felix, and this is all we know of him. Of the English or Anglo-Saxon versions, one, the elder, is in prose, and the other, probably founded upon it, is in verse. The Latin text could not have been written later than 749, because in that year the king to whom it was dedicated died. Felix was never acquainted with Guthlac personally; he drew his materials for the biography from others who had known him; and this throws the age of the actual hermit himself still farther back. The coming of St. Augustine was in 597, so that between the advent of Christianity and the latest possible date for the work of Felix there would be an interval of 152 years; and as it was some time after the first appearance of Augustine, and some time before 749, we may not be far wrong in ascribing the events of the story to the end of the seventh century.

The poetic narrative is very vigorous, and reminds one of the old Beowulf style of spirited verse. It is to be found in the *Codex Exoniensis*, of which the late eminent Saxonist, Benjamin Thorpe, has furnished us with an excellent edition, at the expense of the Society of Antiquaries. The prose text which I quote forms part of the Cottonian

Library now in the British Museum. It will be found in the volume marked "Vespasian D. XXI." It was probably written about the time of the Conquest.

The narrative commences with an extraordinary account of the birth of the hero, and then notices that the name Guthlac, coming to him from the family to which he belonged, seems no less miraculous than the almost Oriental wonders attending his birth, signifying one who acts as a sacrifice in (or for) war. The writer insists specially on this, giving the Latin translation of the name (*belli munus*), as if to make it more evident. When arrived at man's estate he suddenly burned to distinguish himself after the manner of the heroes of old, collecting a numerous following, and commencing a regular raid on such as were his enemies—burning, slaying, destroying, and so forth, with extreme vigour. "Then was he on a sudden inwardly admonished of God, and taught that he should thus give command: Of all things which he had so taken he bade give back the third part to those from whom he had taken it. It was about nine years that he was thus engaged in hostile raids, the blessed Guthlac, and he thus wandered amidst the tumult of this present world. It happened one night, when he had come from an expedition, and he rested his weary limbs, and thought over many things in his mind, that he was suddenly inspired with divine awe, and his heart within was filled with spiritual love; and when he awoke he thought on the old kings who were of yore, who, thinking on miserable death and the wretched end of sinful life, forsook this world and the great wealth which they once possessed, he saw all of a sudden vanish; and he saw his own life daily hasten and hurry to an end,

Then was he suddenly so excited inwardly with godly fear that he vowed to God, if He would spare him till the morrow, that he would be his servant. When the darkness of the night was gone, and it was day, he arose and signed himself with the mark of Christ's rood. Then bade he his companions that they should find them another captain and leader of their company, and he confessed to them and said that he would be Christ's servant. When his companions heard these words, they were greatly astonished, and much alarmed for the words which they had heard." They tried in vain to persuade him to alter his determination. He received the mystical tonsure, and lived two years in preparation for the holy warfare, devoting himself to letters and to the acquirement of the habit of singing the Canticles, etc. Hearing of the lives of the learned anchorites of yore, his heart was inwardly inspired with the love of God to long for the wilderness, and he begged leave to depart thither.

"Now there is in Britain a fen of immense size which begins from the river Granta, not far from the city Granchester. There are immense marshes, now a black pool of water, now foul running streams, and also many islands, and reeds, and hillocks, and thickets, and with manifold windings, wide and long, it continues up to the North Sea."

Guthlac, hearing that this place was the abode of devils, and was so full of every kind of supernatural horror that no man could endure it, resolved to go thither. He embarked with a guide in a vessel, and went through the fens till they came to a spot which is called Crowland, situated in the waste of the aforesaid fen, very obscure, and very

few men knew of it except the one who showed it him; as no man could inhabit it before the holy man Guthlac came thither, on account of the dwelling of the accursed spirits there.

Then the mode of life adopted by this hermit is very minutely dwelt upon. It is said that in this island there was a great mound raised upon the earth. "On the other side of this mound a place was dug, as it were a great water-cistern. Over this cistern the blessed man Guthlac built himself a house at the beginning, as soon as he settled in the hermit station." He decided on wearing neither woollen nor linen garments, but to use a clothing of skins. The first manifestation that he appeared to have had was a visit from the arch-fiend himself, who infused certain horrid doubts into the hermit's mind. But here he was relieved by the personal intervention of St. Bartholomew, who removed the doubts and the tormentor at the same time. "Then two devils came to see him, sliding down from the air, and they spoke plainly to him," the aim of their talk being to show that man has no right to fast longer than seven days. Of course, the saint knew better, and sent these spirits about their business very soon. "But some days after this he was assailed by great hosts of the accursed spirits, and they filled all the house with their coming; and they poured in on every side, from above and from beneath, and everywhere. They were in countenance horrible, and they had great heads, and long necks, and lean visages; they were filthy and squalid in their beards; and they had rough ears, and distorted faces, and fierce eyes and foul mouths; and their teeth were like horses' tusks; and their throats were filled with flame, and they

were grating in their voice: they had crooked shanks, and knees big and great behind, and distorted toes, and shrieked hoarsely with their voices; and they came with such immoderate noises and immense horror, that it seemed to him that all between heaven and earth resounded with their dreadful cries. Without delay, when they were come into the house, they soon bound the holy man in all his limbs, and they pulled and led him out of the cottage, and brought him to the black fen, and threw and sunk him in the muddy waters. After this they brought him into the wild places of the wilderness, among the dense thickets of brambles, that all his body was torn. After that, the cursed spirits took him and beat him with iron whips, and after that they brought him on their creaking wings amidst the cold regions of the air. When he was at this height in the air he saw all the north part of heaven as it were surrounded by the blackest clouds of intense darkness. Then he saw suddenly an immense host of cursed spirits come towards him; and they soon gathered together, and forthwith all led the holy man to the black places of torment and brought him to hell's door. When he saw the foulness of the smoke and the burning flames, and the horror of the black abyss, he quickly forgot all the torments and the punishments which he had before suffered and endured from the accursed spirits. Then the accursed spirits rushed in and tumbled among the horrible flames, and there they tormented with manifold punishments the souls of unrighteous men. When the blessed Guthlac saw the greatness of the punishments, he was much terrified for dread of them. Then cried the accursed spirits with a great voice, and thus spake: Power is given unto us to

thrust thee into the torments of this abyss, and here is the fire which thou thyself didst kindle within thee, and for thy sins and crimes hell's door openeth before thee." They then motioned as though they would thrust him in, when again St. Bartholomew descends as a *deus ex machinâ*, and gets him out of the hobble. He is then led back to his hovel again. Here he observes two devils weeping and wailing because their power is all broken through the saint.

But certainly the queerest part in this narrative is the sixth chapter. The others, of which I have given an abstract, tell us something of the ways, manners, and customs of the inhabitants, of the dwellers in the region of evil spirits, but in the sixth chapter we learn what their language is. The heading of the chapter is "*How the Devils spoke British.*" We are informed that the saint was awakened from his sleep at cock-crow by a great host of the accursed spirits talking together, and as he had been a prisoner among that people, he knew the British language in which the devils conversed. They entered his house, hung him up on the points of their spears, and so forth. But he overcame them by singing a psalm in Latin, which seemed too much for them, for they departed like smoke at the first verse. After this he is attacked by demons, in the form of herds of wild beasts of all kinds. Of course he puts them to flight, and becomes celebrated for having driven away the devils from Crowland,—at all events, I am told, in confirmation of this part of the story, that none have been seen there since.

The death of the saint in the odour of sanctity, the visits paid to him by English kings, abbots, bishops, and other important people, together with his wonderful

prescience and insight into other people's affairs, fill up the rest of the little volume.

There is a series of remarkable medallions in the British Museum illustrating the legend. Thorpe's edition of the prose text is still occasionally to be met with. It is furnished with a translation into modern English on the opposite page.

This may be taken as a fair example of a hermit's life, or, rather, of what was believed concerning these "holy men".

The lives of the saints form an interesting portion of the literature of the middle ages, and it does not require any very great amount of research to show the student that the hermit-monk of the Christian times was nothing more than the pagan hero, with surroundings very slightly differing from those of his prototype. His combats with supernatural enemies are the same in both cases; and as the pagan element may be traced back from Milton through Cædmon to the remote Scandinavian past, so do we find the spirit of Beowulf in many a monkish legend that would fain be Christian if it could; and in the mystic symbolisation so loved by the mediæval fathers, we have the same spirit that prompted the Scandinavian Vala to unfold the hidden mysteries conveyed, and at the same time concealed, in the weird stories of the *Edda*.

As long as the hermit kept to his cell, and amused the country people with the stories of his fights, no great harm was done. It was indeed far better that the unlettered classes should have an irrational belief in the existence of another world, than that they should

absolutely deny the existence of anything beyond this world of mud and stone. Better the blind belief in something superior to self, than the overweening rejection of everything which we cannot understand. Better the blind confidence in such a monk as our friend of Crowland, than in the agnosticism of the present day.

Unfortunately, however, this was not the order of history. Monasteries were founded, and the superior rulers of these institutions were priests of high rank. The abbot was a man of distinction, *ex officio* holding military rank in many cases, and actually bound, notwithstanding his priestly office, to serve in his king's wars. Thus, in the struggles of the English against the Conqueror, we read of certain abbots who lent their aid, coming in person, armed, to assist Hereward at Ely. Later on this becomes still more remarkable.

But the beneficent influence of abbot, priest, or monk has always been that which has been exercised in the sphere of life to which they more particularly belong. To afford men of quiet and studious habits an opportunity of pursuing their studies and of cultivating religious thoughts, in times when the sword was better understood than the pen, was decidedly a good thing, and we are indebted to such institutions for the records of what are called the Dark Ages.

In everything which the early English took up they were thoroughly in earnest, and they "went in" for Christianity with immense force of will, although the strong spirit of conservatism led them still to preserve the festivals of the older time, which indeed are observed by us at the present day. They built monasteries, and

there was a large proportion of the population at the time of the Norman usurpation rendered non-combatant by monastic vows.

Among those to whom we owe a vast debt of gratitude for good work quietly and well done, the name of the venerable Bede stands proudly foremost; and as he was an Englishman, you will very likely know very little about him. Bede was born in the year of our Lord 673, at Wearmouth, in the very year when the most famous of all our Church councils was held at Hertford, for the purpose of enforcing certain general regulations of the Church. At Wearmouth were two monasteries, and another near them at the village of Jarrow. In his own short autobiography he tells us that he was placed, at the age of seven years, under the care of Abbot Benedict, in the abbey of Wearmouth, that of Jarrow not being then built; but, when this second establishment was founded, Bede appears to have gone thither under Ceolfrid, its first abbot, and to have resided there for the remainder of his life.

The founder of this abbey, a certain Benedict Biscop, was a man of extraordinary piety and singular learning. He was a nobleman by birth, and yet he was unwearied in the pursuit of knowledge, and in ameliorating the condition of his country. It was he who first brought masons and glaziers with him to serve in the noble buildings which he caused to be erected. He went to Rome, and became intimate with Pope Agatho; and hearing there the Roman method of chanting, introduced the Roman liturgy, for before his time the Gallican liturgy had been used in this island. He brought with him also the most valuable

collection of books, relics, and works of art that could be procured for money. Thus, Bede was extremely fortunate in having the means of gratifying his taste and thirst for learning. He was well looked after, and was evidently popular with the monks; and although the rule of the order gave little time for any special or separate study out of the ordinary course, he seems to have found time to get through an immense amount of work. His own words on this interesting subject are: "All my life I spent in that same monastery, giving my whole attention to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and in the intervals between the hours of regular discipline and the duties of singing in the church, I always took pleasure in learning, or teaching, or writing something."

He was admitted to Holy Orders at the early age of nineteen, which was perfectly exceptional at that time, when the earliest age for admission was twenty-five. In his thirtieth year he was made a priest, and then his duties, of course, prevented him from engaging as much as he would desire in his literary work. He died on Ascension Day, the 26th May 735. His works are very numerous. They were first printed in a collected form at Paris, in 1544 and 1545, and reprinted in 1554 in six volumes folio. These editions are now extremely rare. The first three volumes of the former, containing the theological writings, are in the British Museum. Another edition was printed at Basle in 1563, in eight volumes. This is much more common.

No writer has been so much beloved and appreciated. His works were, for the most part, written in Latin; but the *Ecclesiastical History* was translated into English by

Alfred, and his treatise, *De Naturæ Rerum*, also exists in an English form.

Writers at the present day are largely indebted to the *Ecclesiastical History*, which, indeed, is the chief text-book for the events of the period through which Bede lived. As a specimen of the clearness of his grasp of the subject, I select at haphazard a passage from the eighth chapter of the third book of this interesting work.

"In the year of our Lord 640, King Eadbald, King of Kent, departed this life, and left his kingdom to his son Earconbert, which he most nobly governed twenty-four years and some months. He was the first of the English kings that of his supreme authority commanded the idols throughout his whole kingdom to be forsaken and destroyed, and the fast of forty days before Easter to be observed; and that the same might not be neglected, he appointed proper and condign punishments for the offenders. His daughter, Earcongota, as became the offspring of such a parent, was a most virtuous virgin, always serving God in a monastery in France, built by a most noble abbess called Fara, at a place called Brie; for at that time but few monasteries being built in the country of the Angles, many were wont, for the sake of monastic conversation, to repair to the monasteries of the Franks or the Gauls, and they also sent their daughters there to be instructed and delivered to their heavenly bridegroom, especially in the monasteries of Brie, of Chelles, and Audelys; among whom were also Sethfrid, daughter of the wife of Anna, king of the East Angles, and Ethelberga, natural daughter of the same king, both of whom, though strangers, were for their virtue made abbesses of the monastery of Brie."

This is a valuable little piece of information; nor is it possible to open the *Ecclesiastical History* without coming upon interesting matter, whether actually valuable as descriptive of facts, or as picturing forth the mode of thought of the time. The belief that a monastic life, if properly followed up, was the very gate and entrance into heaven, was held by most people of that time; and the extraordinary tales recounted of the translation of saints, their miracles, and the wonderful efficacy of their bones and dust, were gravely accepted as facts by the innocent and pure-minded Bede. And even these are instructive in their way.

I will now give you an account of the responsible functions belonging to the priest's office.

"Priests! You ought to be well provided with books and apparel as suits your condition. The mass-priest should at least have his missal, his singing-book, his reading-book, his psalter, his handbook, his penitential and his numeral one. He ought to have his officiating garments, and to sing from sunrise, with the nine intervals and nine readings. His sacramental cup should be of gold or silver, glass or tin, and not of earth, at least not of wood. The altar should be always clean, well clothed, and not defiled with dirt. There should be no mass without wine.

"Take care that ye be better and wiser in your spiritual craft than worldly men are in theirs, that you may be fit teachers of true wisdom. The priest should preach rightly the true belief; read fit discourses; visit the sick; and baptise infants, and give the unction when desired. No one should be a covetous trader, nor a plunderer, nor be

drunk often in wine-houses, nor be proud or boastful, nor wear ostentatious girdles, nor be adorned with gold, but to do honour to himself by his good morals.

"They should not be litigious nor quarrelsome, nor seditious, but should pacify the contending; nor carry arms, nor go to any fight, though some say that priests should carry weapons when necessity requires; yet the servant of God ought not to go to any war or military exercise. Neither a wife nor a battle becomes them, if they will rightly obey God and keep His laws as becomes their state."

Their duties are also described by the canons of Edgar in the following terms:—

"They are forbidden to carry controversy among themselves to a lay tribunal. Their own companions were to settle it, or the bishop was to determine it.

"No priest was to forsake the church to which he was consecrated, nor to intermeddle with the rights of others, nor to take the scholar of another. He was to learn sedulously his own handicraft, and not put another to shame for his ignorance, but to teach him better. The high-born were not to despise the less born, nor any to be unrighteous or covetous dealers. He was to baptise whenever required, and to abolish all heathenism and witchcraft. They were to take care of their churches, and apply exclusively to their sacred duties, and not to indulge in idle speech, or idle deeds, or excessive drinking; nor to let dogs come within their church-inclosure, nor more swine than a man might govern.

"They were to celebrate mass only in churches, and on the altar, unless in cases of extreme sickness. They

were to have at mass their corporalis garments, and the subucula under their alba; and all their officiating garments were to be woven. Each was to have a good and right book. No one was to celebrate mass unless fasting, and unless he had one to make responses; nor more than three times a day; nor unless he had for the Eucharist, pure bread, wine and water. The cup was to be of something molten, not of wood. No woman was to come near the altar during mass. The bell was to be rung at the proper time.

"They were to preach every Sunday to the people, and always to give good examples. They were ordered to teach youth with care, and to draw them to some craft. They were to distribute alms, and urge the people to give them, and to sing the psalms during the distribution, and to exhort the poor to intercede for the donors. They were forbidden to swear, and were to avoid ordeals. They were to recommend confession, penitence, and compensation; to administer the sacrament to the sick, and to anoint him if he desired it, and the priest was always to keep oil ready for the purpose of baptism. He was neither to hunt, hawk, nor dice; but to play with his book as became his condition."*

"In the tenth century", says the historian of the Anglo-Saxons, Sharon Turner, "a new religious discipline was spreading in Europe, which occasioned the misfortunes in the reign of Edwin (usually called Edwy). This was the Benedictine Order of Monks, an order which, in

* Preface to Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, by Dr. Giles, London, 1880.

the course of time, became celebrated in Europe beyond every other."

The founder of this order was an Italian named Benedict, who sought to mortify the flesh by living quite alone in a cave in a desert place into which he was lowered by a friend. His mortification consisted in rolling his unprotected body among thorns, so as to produce very copious bleeding. He was considered one of the most genuine aspirants to saintly fame that ever laid claim to saintship. His admirers were so numerous that he was enabled to found many monasteries. He afterwards went to Naples, destroyed some heathen temples, started a monastery there, and laid down a new set of rules for its governance. Of these rules there are Anglo-Saxon translations in the British Museum, and I must direct your attention to the MS. Reg. 10A, 13, which contains an exposition of it by Dunstan, with his picture.

The order was introduced at Fleury, to which place the body of Benedict was transferred from Mount Cassin, where he had died. Fleury was plundered by the Normans, and the monks had become irregular, when Odo, a staunch supporter of the order, succeeded in reducing them to rule, and the influence of the monastery spread westward.

Odo was a Dano-Englishman, a descendant of one of those Scandinavians who, under Hingvar and Hubba, came to England to revenge the fate of Ragnar Lodbrok. He had been a soldier before he assumed the ecclesiastical career, and was with Athelstan in the battle of Brunnanburg. He became Archbishop of Canterbury, and to his

teaching much of Dunstan's holiness has been attributed. He was the man who introduced the rule into England, and his strict observance of it may have had much to do with Dunstan's career, and thus he influenced a part of the political history of the country.

Dunstan was born in 925. His parents were Heorstan and Cynethryth, who seem to have lived near Glastonbury. He frequently visited the old British church there. It is said that he had there a vision of his future greatness, and that a venerable phantom pointed out the place where he was to build a superb monastery. His parents encouraged him to study, and he soon excelled his companions and ran rapidly through the course of study marked out for him. Being attacked by fever, he, in a sudden access of delirium, jumped out of bed, upset his nurse, and seizing a stick which was near him, was off over the hills and neighbouring plains, under the delusion that a whole pack of wild dogs was after him. His wanderings led him towards night to a church. This church had been undergoing repair. Workmen had been busy mending the roof. The scaffolding was left, of course, and Dunstan, rushing wildly up a ladder, gained the roof, and somehow or other, thanks to the wonderful provision of the Creator, by which sleep-walkers and delirious persons seem preserved from frightful accidents, he reached the flooring of the interior unhurt. As the church doors had not been opened, the attendants who came to perform their usual duties in the morning were very much astonished at finding him there. Nor was his surprise less than theirs, for, of course, he knew nothing about his mode of getting there, and returned to his

ordinary sane condition of mind to wonder at his strange position.

Admission was obtained for him to the monastery at Glastonbury. He worked hard, lived soberly and morally, and made himself master of everything that the monks could teach. What mathematics were then taught he learnt; he acquired an excellent knowledge of music, and the arts of painting and engraving. He became skilful in working gold and silver.

His ambition at first was to be a courtier, and a relative introduced him to the king, who was delighted with his powers as a musician. His other accomplishments won him great distinction, and of course many enemies, who, to ruin him, ascribed his proficiency in these various arts to magic. They were successful, and Dunstan was driven from court. History repeated herself in Wolsey.

After his banishment from court, he formed an attachment to a maiden whom he wished to marry, but his relation, Bishop Ælfheag, opposed the match, and conjured Dunstan to become a monk. But Dunstan had no inclination for the cloister, and resisted the importunities of the bishop. The conflict between ambition and the emotions called forth by the eloquence of Ælfheag unhinged poor Dunstan's mind, and a long and dangerous illness was the result of the mental turmoil. On his recovery he decided for the cowl, and became a monk. But he did not lay aside either his ambition or his energy when assuming the monastic garb. Determined on pre-eminence, under whatever circumstances he might be placed, Dunstan now sought to render himself the

most famous of monks. Accordingly, he made with his own hands a cave or cell so singularly constructed, that his biographer Osborne,* who had seen it, did not know what to call it. It was more like a grave than a human habitation. Cells were usually excavated in a rising ground or raised upon such, but this was dug into the earth. It was five feet long, and two and a half wide. Its height was the stature of a man standing in the excavation. The whole was covered by a door, in which was a small aperture to admit light and air. It was in this retreat that the well-known temptation took place. The recluse had with him all the tools necessary for his work as a smith, and one night, while he was supposed to be engaged in such occupation, the whole neighbourhood was startled by the most terrific howlings that could be imagined. So fearful was the din, that a neighbouring hill was rent into three pieces by the mere sound. In the morning the people flocked round the window of the saint to inquire into the cause of the unearthly clamour. He informed them that Satan, having thrust his head through the window, or rather aperture in the door, to tempt him while he was at work, Dunstan made his tongs red-hot and therewith seized the arch-fiend by the nose. After this, the respect and veneration of the country people became immense, but was still further increased by a certain wealthy noble lady, Ethelfleda, of royal descent, leaving him all her property, which he distributed to the poor.

This lady, some time before her death, had spoken in Dunstan's favour to the king, and again he was recalled to court, whither he gladly hastened, for ambition was his

* *Cleopat.* B. 13.

ruling passion. Still he had to contemplate court-life from a very different standpoint. His disappointment in the love affair just referred to seems greatly to have embittered his life, without extinguishing the burning desire of shining above others. Naturally he met with many enemies, but he defied them all, supported as he was by the chancellor Thurketul and the primate Odo. The first step to his future greatness was his appointment as abbot to the Abbey of Glastonbury.

The Benedictine order being now, from its real merits, so popular in Europe, Dunstan introduced it into his monastery, and made himself its most active patron. There is a MS. in the British Museum containing Dunstan's exposition of the rule of St. Benedict, with his portrait.*

The power of this extraordinary man increased with extreme rapidity. He was chosen by the king for his confidential friend and counsellor. To him the king sent all his choicest treasures, and those amassed by the preceding sovereigns, to be kept in the monastery under his inspection.

The see of Winchester was now offered to him, but he was too clever to accept it, having higher aims in view. The king urged, and entreated; his mother invited him to dinner and added her persuasions; but Dunstan still refused, declaring that he could not leave the king unattended, and in fact he would not leave him even to accept the metropolitan see.

He went home. In the morning he returned to the king and told him that he had seen a vision, in which St. Peter struck him, and said, "This is thy punishment for thy re-

* MSS. R. 10, A. 13.

fusal, and a token to thee not to decline hereafter the Primacy of England." The king could not have been a very bright specimen of a royal personage, as he never saw through the trick, but interpreted the vision to mean that Dunstan was to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Odo, who governed the see, was very old, and Dunstan was nominated as his successor as soon as Odo should die.

The king had been ailing all his reign, and feeling his end approaching, sent Dunstan to fetch the royal treasures which were in his charge, but before the monk could return the king had breathed his last. Of course this was too good a chance for Dunstan to neglect, and he at once asserted that he had been fully prepared for the sad event by a supernatural communication. The Anglo-Saxons were kind enough to accept this on the strength of Dunstan's assertion, and his fame was duly increased.

Edwin was a very young man indeed, and in ascending the throne had everything against him. Dunstan sought to make of him a mere tool to carry out his own schemes of ambition, and his meddling produced such catastrophes as the undue interference of the clergy in mundane matters always brings about.

The disappointment in Dunstan's matrimonial plans has been referred to, and I am inclined to attribute his behaviour to the young king more directly to this source. The story of his conduct is not generally known, and as it is very instructive as a lesson on the manners of the time, I will tell it.

On the very day of the coronation, a feast was spread in the great hall (which was the same thing to all intents

as that described by me in a former lecture, when speaking of the Saxon hall in the pagan times*), and the king was on the high bank, or daïs of later times, while around the hall his lords and officers of state were seated, just in the same manner as had been usual with *their* forefathers five hundred years before Edwin's time. The rude mirth, coarse jests, and furious drinking which set in after the withdrawal of the ladies to the Bower (the γυναικεῖον of the Greeks, our *with*-drawing room) seemed to disgust the young monarch, who rose from his seat and "joined the ladies" before the proper time, very naturally preferring the society of the lovely Ethelgiva to that of the haughty Dunstan and his friends, thereby showing his taste. But the assembled guests resented this defection of the young king, and at last Dunstan, and his relation Cynesius, a bishop, were sent to bring back Edwin whether he would or not.

The two priests rushed to the Bower, and finding the king in company with his wife Ethelgiva and her mother, actually dragged him by main force back to the hall. They forced the diadem on to his head, and so brought him before the riotous throng.

Here is an instance of the abuse of power by a monk, with a vengeance. But the cruelty, injustice, and tyranny of the churchman were not sufficiently gratified by this display of brutality. Means were taken to discover that the lady was too near of kin to Edwin to be his lawful wife, and all the monkish writers speak of her in the most disrespectful and abusive terms. William of Malmesbury perhaps the most so. But Ethelgiva had reproached the

* *Older England*, Lecture I, "The Sword," p. 21.

monk for intruding on the king's privacy in so shameless a manner, and Dunstan never forgave her for the words she used.

Now began one of the grimmest battles between Church and State that ever have been fought. Edwin was not the quiet tool that Dunstan had expected to find in him. "Wounded in every feeling of pride, dignity, and kingly honour, he," as Sharon Turner says, "was alive only to his resentment. He deprived Dunstan of his honours and wealth, and condemned him to banishment."

This was too stormy to be wise. Dunstan was no every-day monk. A man who had taken the arch-fiend by the nose, who had been favoured with various kinds of visions, and whose fame for sanctity had been supported in every possible way, was sure to be popular, and the people of that day adored him as their idol. He was backed by the favour of Thurketul, whose friend he was. He had been named as the successor of Odo, who was greatly attached to him. Thus the course taken by the king was precisely best adapted to set the whole of the powerful machinery of the Church in motion against him. Odo considered himself insulted in his friend, and in revenge divorced the king from his wife, on the plea of kinship existing between them. And we have a lively picture of the state of society in the tenth century when we read that the Archbishop sent soldiers to the palace to tear the unfortunate Ethelgiva away. She was carried off by force, and her face branded with a hot iron, to destroy the beauty which had been so attractive to the king and so dangerous to Dunstan. She was then banished to Ireland. Nature, however, proving too strong for the monks, healed the scars on her lovely face, and brought

her back to Gloucester in all her former charms. Again was she taken by the wretched fanatics, who repeated the operation of destroying her beauty with the branding-iron, but added the further revolting cruelty of cutting the nerves and muscles of her legs, so that she should not escape the vengeance of her foes. Again Nature stepped in, and, by a timely death, saved her from further indignities and further torture.

Edwin was deprived of the greater part of his possessions. The Mercians and Northumbrians revolted against him, drove him beyond the Thames, and appointed his brother Edgar, a boy of thirteen years of age, to succeed him. Dunstan was immediately recalled with honour.

The popularity of the Benedictine reformation, of which Dunstan was the exponent, was the great engine by which Edwin was oppressed. Though there is considerable obscurity as to the place and manner of his death, there can be but little doubt that it was a violent one. In a MS. in the British Museum we are expressly told that he was killed in Gloucestershire; the monks, either directly or indirectly, were the cause, and this is confirmed by the violent outcry they raised against him.

His fall was a misfortune, not only to England, but to Europe in general, in that it made the fear of ecclesiastical power the greatest terror of men's minds. It established a precedent for the absolute disregard of any other motive in a country than the caprice of a monk! Rome was the tyrant once more that she had been before her destruction by the Northern heroes from whom we are descended, and she began her work of vengeance in terrible earnest. Law, justice, the royal function, everything gave

way before the crushing force of the monkish power. Dunstan reigned in England. The death of Odo happened before that of Edwin, and the man appointed by the king died on his journey to Rome, and his successor Brythelm was forced to abdicate in favour of Dunstan.

Edgar was emphatically the grand supporter of the Benedictines. He is therefore loudly lauded in the monkish chronicles, notwithstanding the profligacy of his private character. Dunstan used his power to plant the land with the new monks, to the exclusion of the ancient clergy; and so important did he become, that, at the death of Edgar, the ecclesiastical friends of Dunstan succeeded in crowning Edward, to the exclusion of Ethelred. Revolutions took place; a civil war raged between the new monks and the old clergy; monasteries were pulled down, and all kinds of troubles arose. A synod was convened at Winchester to adjust these disputes, and the crucifix in the wall uttered a miraculous decree forbidding any change. This was pronounced by Dunstan to be the will of God expressed in human language from the holy sign. A similar sleight-of-hand performance was exhibited during the assembly of a special council of nobles convened at Calne, but on this occasion the catastrophe was far more serious, being, indeed, as foul and wholesale a murder as any in history. I give it on the authority of Osborne.

The king was absent, and the senators were debating with considerable warmth, and violently reproaching Dunstan. He replied to them in these remarkable words:—"I confess that I am unwilling you should conquer. I commit the cause of the Church to Christ." He had scarcely uttered them, when the floor-beams

and rafters gave way, and precipitated the company, with the ruins, to the earth below. The seat of Dunstan only remained unmoved and unshaken.

The most remarkable part of this narrative is the circumstance of the meeting taking place in an upper floor; for the Anglo-Saxons, as a rule, loved the ground-floor only, and their buildings partook of the features of the old Scandinavian hall described in *Beowulf*. That this was a special matter and a specially arranged assembly-room or man-trap, there can be no doubt.

Other biographers than Osborne dwell at length on the power possessed by Dunstan of seeing and overcoming infernal spirits, so that the account here given of him is not to be attributed to any unusual amount of credulity on the part of this author.

During the Danish usurpation, the power of the monks had little chance of being manifested. Dunstan had passed away, and there was in fact little time in the short intervals of peace for the monks to come strongly forward. They withdrew into their monasteries, and occupied themselves with writing and illuminating manuscripts, and they produced immense numbers of most interesting specimens of early English art, many of which are still preserved in the National collection. Again, it became a boon to the quiet recluse to have a spot to which he could retire, secure from the troubles of the fighting world; and in this reference monasteries seem to have been productive of some good. But the de-humanising tendencies of monastic rule was, apart from this possibility of their having any beneficial results, demoralising in the extreme. No pride is so arrogant as religious pride, and no men have

ever showed themselves so completely the sport of the passion of exercising sway over others as Dunstan, Becket, and Wolsey.

Although Englishmen, the lives of the two latter men are doubtless familiar to all my readers. They are only repetitions, under other circumstances, of that of Dunstan.

The Normans had adopted Christianity somewhat oddly. With them it was originally either assumed, in a spirit of dissimulation or in perfect indifference to the means, their end being the occupation of Neustria. By degrees, however, the influence of their clergy and of their monks became paramount. The self-assertion and love of dominion which we have seen manifested in Dunstan suited the Norman character exactly, and it is not too much to say that every Norman was as arrogant as that old Saxon monk. But the Normans were soldiers, and knew the value of discipline, which became introduced into their monasteries as sternly as into their camps. Licentious, haughty, cold, unprincipled, the Norman monk resembled the Norman baron in his grand capacity for hatred, and in the readiness with which he submitted to any discipline which should ensure strength; while the English monk, under the Danish rule, had subsided into either a studious recluse, amusing himself with drawing pictures or writing books, or (much more frequently) a good-for-nothing, ale-swilling, idle loon, accepting the tonsure as a safeguard against work.

During his exile among the Normans, Edward, surnamed the Confessor, conceived an exalted opinion of their merits, when contrasted with the relaxed rule of the English monks. The nobles who had shared his exile formed

their opinions upon his, and an almost monastic court was the result. Imbued with the feeling that Norman boastfulness was chivalry, Norman pride refinement, and Norman asceticism religion, it is no wonder that Edward was disconcerted at the state of things which he found in England. Still, there is no excuse for his desiring to see his country rather Normandy than England, which all his measures tended to make it.

These measures prepared the way for the so-called Conquest, and we owe that national disgrace to the fact of the king having been more than half a monk.

As soon as William sat upon the throne he sought to bring the monasteries under Norman abbots, thinking that by their influence he could appeal to all classes of the people; and while he crushed their bodies with the mailed hand of his robber baron, he could drive them to utter despair by placing the awful powers of the Church in the hands of his monks. The number, however, of these Norman abbots is very much less than we should have expected to find, especially as the Anglo-Saxon Church, during the whole of this century, had been more or less obnoxious to the Papal court, and the Pope considered the conquest as a victory of what may be specifically termed Romanism. Few as these abbots were in number, their influence was immense, and I may more especially instance the work done by Lanfranc, who was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury in 1070, after William had deposed Stigand and several Anglo-Saxon prelates. At first, Lanfranc, who had refused the Archbishopric of Rouen, declined the honours offered him in England, but finally accepted them. One of his first acts was to eject the secular

clerks, who had recovered their position in the Church since the time of Dunstan, and to supply their place with monks. He even treated with contempt the memory of the old English saints, and abolished every part of the English service which differed from that of Rome. It is true that his reforms were mostly judicious, but they were much resented by the Anglo-Saxon monks, who cultivated their own beloved English all the more for its suppression. Thus, while the people, separated from the government by race and language, lived a separate existence independent of their Norman rulers, and spoke the colloquial English without any taint of foreign infusion, the only learned men amongst them, the monks, found the tendency to drift into Latinity checked by the very acts which were intended to urge them further into it.

The grievous fad of celibacy was not confined to the sterner sex. There were monasteries for women, who were called *Ancren*, or nuns. A curious work of the end of the twelfth century, thus quite in the Norman times, and entitled the *Ancren Riwl*, gives us a series of maxims for the conduct of these female recluses; but although rich in very quaint and curious advice, it is rather a disappointing book on the whole. We should have expected to find more actual points of observance laid down and insisted on than we do. The MSS. in the British Museum, marked respectively Nero, A. XIV, Cleopatra, C. VI, Titus, D. XVIII, will repay attention. I will present a small fragment to your notice, taken from Morton's edition of this work, published by the Camden Society, page 210.

"Summe iuglurs beoth thet ne kunnen serven of non other gleo, buten makien cheres and wrenchen mis hore

muth and schulen mid hore eien. Of this mestere serveth theo uniselie ontfule ithe deofles kurt, to bringen o leihtre hore outfule loverd. Vor gif ei seith wel other deth wel nonesweis ne muwen heo loken thiderward mid riht eie of gode heorte auh wincketh othere half and biholdeth o luft and asquint."

The whole course of advice given is equally grotesque.

Among the great helps to modern research into ancient documents, I must call your attention to a work by my friend, Mr. Walter de Gray Birch, of the MS. Department. It is a thin book in 8vo., giving a chronological list of all the religious houses in England and Wales prior to the Norman disgrace. According to his statement, there were nearly three hundred religious houses established in England and Wales before the year 1066. The list of establishments is in chronological order, and is followed by an alphabetical list of the names of the Saxon abbots and abbesses, with the date and authority affixed.

I gave you a picture of the robber Baron in his castle, leading rather a dismal life there, having nobody to fight with but his brother Normans, who frequently gratified his pugnacious propensities by commencing a deadly feud; still, that was a rare gratification, too wasteful on the whole of Norman life to be frequent, although in Stephen's time we have seen that there was rather too much fighting. To combine their love of bloodshed with the Christian creed seems to have been a happy thought, and this resulted in the institution of military orders of monks, who, instead of cowl and gown, wore arms and armour. Fortunately there was a demand for as well as a supply of these gentry, and the Holy Wars (Heaven save the mark!) turning up

before it was quite too late, the most turbulent and objectionable of these military tyrants marched off on crusading expeditions, to the great relief of the country in one respect, although the contributions levied on the towns pressed rather roughly on the mercantile class. Still, to get rid of them was cheap at almost any price; and if the Crusades did that amount of service to us, and diminished the number of non-English dwellers in England, we are bound as true English people to be thankful for this means of their removal. Norman-French was forgotten, though some traces of Norman rule remain. We must be just, and in admitting our debt to the Crusades, own that they were the invention of a monk.

Lecture IV.

ARMOUR.

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ARMOUR.

THE study of the history of defensive armour divides the subject naturally into three classes, which may be designated respectively chain mail, mixed armour, and plate. Of course, this nomenclature has reference to metallic armour alone, for there must be a further classification of our subject into metallic and non-metallic armour.

As the consideration of the specimens in the British Museum must chiefly engage our attention at present, and as they are, as we should be led to expect, of the metallic order, our inquiry will be directed to the study of that order in the first instance, leaving the consideration of non-metallic armour for future occasions.

Philology, mythology, history, and legendary lore, all unite in furnishing evidence that man, like the sun, rose in the East and then began a glorious march westward. This seems to have been the order of human progression from times long anterior to all historic periods. Wave after wave of population has surged westwards, each overwhelming and effacing the traces of its predecessors. Strange discoveries have been made in far-off Peru, connecting the almost mythical "Children of the Sun" with certain Aryan people in India. And the Aryans themselves have actually overwhelmed and destroyed in their

westerly flood of population portions of their own race. The Kelts and Kymri have been, as it were, run over by the rush of the Teutonic whirlwind even in historic times, just as those Kelts and Kymri, in their progress to the West, flooded and swamped the aborigines of Western Europe.

It sounds vague to talk of "the East". To most people it means India, China—anywhere in Asia. In Russia, it means more specially Turkestan, Afghanistan, and the Punjaub. In Kensington it means Whitechapel; so that when I use the term I must beg you to understand me to confine the idea to some district in the North-Western part of India, more central than Afghanistan.

The dwellers in Afghanistan and the Punjaub are highly conservative, like most Asiatics. The dress that would be historically correct for Runjeet Singh would be equally so for Badjazet. So the language of the learned Brahmins of Central and Southern India, albeit only a written language now, and employed in teaching the sacred myths of the faith, is the Sanskrit of six thousand years ago!

With this tenacity, it is not wonderful that the Aryans should have brought their language, dress, and arms with them; and on carefully investigating the remains of our own race, as discovered in England, in Scandinavia, and in parts of Germany, we find swords, shields, and arms reminding us of Oriental types.

A great and distinguishing feature of Indian armour is that which has obtained the name of "chain mail". This seems to have existed from time immemorial, and to have been copied by the Semitic races from the Aryans; and in

the earliest Teutonic account of armour with which I am acquainted—in fact, the earliest and best Teutonic epos, our glorious English poem of *Beowulf*, we are introduced to this kind of armour. We read of the "war-net", the war sark or shirt, the garment woven of linked rings, hard hand-locked, woven by the smith, but not as women weave. We are told how this good armour served the hero in his combats againt the Nickars and monsters of the deep, who could not pierce the woven rings. The dagger of the female fiend, the mother of the grizzly Grendel, whom he seeks in a weird cavern at the bottom of a lake, cannot penetrate the breast rings of the iron shirt. There are specimens of such chain mail in the British Museum that will at once show how useful it must have been as a defence.

The artists of the Middle Ages represented external objects rather according to their own conception of them than the actual appearance to the eye, while some drew from the ordinary appearance, and others adopted a conventional type as a useful form. These methods of drawing have produced in the minds of archæologists three or four different kinds of mail, whereas only one was intended by all three. Matilda, wife of William the Norman, in representing the armour of the warriors of her time, covered them all over with little rings, and, with the conscientious truthfulness of a woman, she gives the rings entire. Others, especially those who drew the illuminations in our MSS., have drawn rings overlapping each other, because one ring covering part of another produced such an effect to the eye. Others adopted dots, little marks and lines, according to a conventional standard. These various modes

of representing chain mail have been supposed to indicate respectively a kind of armour in which the rings were sewn on cloth or elk-skin, in such a manner as to lie flat on the cloth-surface, just touching each other and no more. The next form gives us armour where one ring is sewn on the cloth or elk-skin in such a manner as to protect the threads of the one next it, thus only allowing edges of rings to be seen. Another kind, supposed to be represented by the crossed lines, has been called mascled armour. The names for these three kinds of armour are due to the theory of the late learned antiquary, Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick.

The armour of the Scandinavian Teutons, including the Angles and the Saxons, consisted of a shirt of mail, called by the Swedes, Danes, and Germans *pansar*, and by the English *byrnie*. This was nothing but a sort of frock made of interlaced rings like those of the modern steel purse, only instead of having split rings, as we do in making the purse, each ring was closed by a little rivet. The labour of producing such a garment must have been immense; and we can understand why the smith should have been so honoured an artificer in that old time when Hengest and Horsa walked about in the Isle of Thanet, where they planted the first seeds of English colonisation. The very name for this artificer is the most usual amongst us to this very day. The poet was often called the verse-smith, and connected with that idea is Milton's "*Linkéd*-sweetness, long drawn out". Even among the gods of Valhalla there was a smith named Völund, who made the swords, shields, and mail of the Æsir, as "Vulcan forged the bolts of Jove"; but our man was a much more estimable deity.

That no remains of early English chain mail have come down to us is not to be wondered at. The time consumed in weaving such shirts was considerable, therefore they were expensive, and the representations in our earlier MSS., etc., show only kings and very distinguished warriors so protected. Besides which, the activity of the Teuton led him rather to despise all kinds of defence save his shield.

The shield was of the wood of the linden tree, and made convex to the foe, so as to look something like a rather shallow umbrella. It was covered on the outside with the skin of some animal. It was white in the case of the young, untried warrior; but the champion who had distinguished himself by the slaughter of a bear or wild bull, was entitled to wear the skin of such creature as covering to his shield. The centre was a boss, covering the aperture for the hand, across which aperture a grip or handle of iron was securely fixed, by which the shield was held. The boss was of bronze, silver-gilt, and even of gold. The circumference, or rand, or rim of the shield was of the same metal as the boss, which differed according to the rank of the wearer.

The helmet was a leathern cap, encircled at the base by a broad metal ring, which again was covered with a thinner plating of gold, differing in breadth according to the rank of the warrior. This lower ring was made to support two half-hoops, which crossed each other at the crown of the head; and in later times one of these was elongated so as to protect the nose, and thus formed the Norman nasal helmet of the tapestry, and of so many illustrations of that which I have designated as the Ring Period in history,*

* *Older England*, First Series, p. 132.

extending from the second century before the Christian era to the beginning of the fifteenth century A.D.

The arms of the early English were the broadsword with the delicate Oriental-looking hilt, and its powerful blade for cutting, a weapon which would well justify the honour paid to it by Scandinavian-English warriors. Besides the sword, the terrible seax, or short, curved dagger, formed an important part of the outfit. Then came the spear and the javelin, a short bow, and rather formidable arrows. The battle-axe was, however, perhaps the most distinctive part of the warrior's fighting outfit, and, wielded by skilful hands, it proved to be a most useful one. Although there is little trace of the war-hammer in English poetry of the early period before the Norman usurpation, there is abundant evidence of its use by the Scandinavians; and "Thor's Hammer" is as fixed in our mythology as the club of Hercules is in that of Greece and Rome.

The English were not fond of fighting on horseback. They preferred hand-to-hand combats on foot, in the good old style. They were celebrated for their splendid "wedge" formation, a much better form in attack and in defence than the square of modern times, which has taken its place as a specially English feature in warfare.

The structure of the ring helmet was eminently adapted to guard the head from the downright blow of the axe or sword. The hoops, or rather half-hoops, crossing each other at the crown, could be made of metal quite stout enough to resist the cut, while a complete helmet of such thickness would have been far too heavy to wear. But it was not proof against the descending arrow shot up in the air, as the Indians in Peru shoot, and which was a mode of shoot-

ing resorted to by William at Hastings with such signal success,—the story of Harold's looking up to receive the arrow in his eye, having been invented long after, to account for the accident, at a time when the original form and structure of the Northern helmet had been forgotten. The pictures of the helmet in the Bayeux Tapestry will at once confirm my statement. The form of this helmet lives in the closed crown still worn as a badge of rank at the present day in England.

As the English were distinguished for their skill as infantry troops, it is natural that their equipment should have been as light as possible. Hence the byrnie, when worn, seldom came below the knee, while the legs were only defended by a stout trellis-work of leather, a sort of cross-gartering that still lives in the pattern of the Highlander's stocking, and is seen in the bandages worn by the Norwegian and Russian peasantry. The knees were either bare, or the coloured linen trousers were drawn over them, and were kept in their place by the leathern cross-gartering alluded to. On foot, the first requisite is agility, therefore the English rather disdained the use of armour, as impeding the motions of the limbs; and we find a king armed in chain, wielding a sword in his hand, defended by an armour-bearer whose lower limbs are quite bare, and whose covering for the body is only a leathern tunic called the rock, or coat. Besides which, the majority of warriors given in the illuminations show the preference for lightness in dress over greater security purchased at the price of too great weight. The warriors are rarely in mail, and seldom provided with any other defence for the head than the combed leathern cap, to

which the name "Champion" is due, being derived from *kæmb*, or *kamb*, a comb.

The Normans, on the other hand, after their settlement in Neustria, were referred to their horses in their attack; consequently, all their equipment partook more and more of a cavalry character. Their knight was called chevalier; their swords were long and more pointed than those of the English, to enable the wearer to use them on horseback, when the lance, in which he put the greatest faith, should have been broken or lost. The inferior people only fought on foot, and were armed with axes and bows.

These circumstances also induced a great amount of elongation in the dress, which was made to fall over the legs on horseback. The lower part of the leg became clothed in leggings of chain mail called *chausses*. The byrnie was furnished with chain-mail sleeves, terminating in mufflers for the hand, and armour in general was called by the French word *mail*. The nasal of the helmet was so much prolonged as to be connected with the mail, now constructed to protect the neck, and called the hauberk, being a corruption of the German *hals-berger*—neck protector. Finally, the whole head was protected by a chain-mail hood called the capuchin.

Such inventions being the work of Normans, it is no matter of surprise that they were known by Norman-French names. The customs of the Normans were always opposed to those of the English, and it would be very strange if we were to find any other than Norman names for anything invented by them. But still, English inventions, or such things as the English brought with them from

Scandinavia, retained their English names, in spite of any Norman modifications to which they might be subject. Thus helm, helmet, shield, sword, rock (for coat), bow, arrow, axe, hammer, ring, and many other words remained in the language, and could not be beaten off the field by Norman-French; while the subsequent innovations in military dress introduced by the Romance race retained their French or Italian names, until they themselves died out and were forgotten.

Philology comes in very often to the assistance of history, and explains apparent differences in names, accounting for them by the laws that regulate the representation of a sound in one language as a different sound in another. It is not generally known why the *w* in old English and old High German words should be replaced by *gu* in French. The reason is that many such words beginning in modern English with *w* commence with an aspirate in Anglo-Saxon. In many of these we write the aspirate nowadays *after* the *w*, as *who, when, where*. The French form of Latin, like the parent, has no aspirate, and when *h* occurs it is reproduced by *g*; hence the name "German", from *Heer-man, i.e.*, man of the Heer or army. Some words in *w* being preceded by *h*, gave rise to the custom of writing *all* such as if the aspirate were used with them. Hence *warian*, to guard, defend oneself, became *guerrian;* war became *guerre*, and warrior, *guerrier*. The lower part of the body is called *wamb* in German; a waistcoat in some parts of Germany is called thence a *wams;* and in the twelfth century there was a garment worn under the chain mail called the *wambais*, or body-piece, being nearer the body than the mail. This became

tortured by the Normans into *gambeis*, by the process which I have just indicated, and was further Normanised into *gambeson*. It was worn under the armour, to keep the rings from rubbing against the body, and also to prevent their being pushed in with the lance-head thrust against them with all the force borrowed from the rush of the horse: for in Norman warfare all the momentum of the attack was obtained from the animals which the warriors bestrode. This circumstance, too, rendered the mail of less value than it would have been for mere foot-fighting, because, although the *wambeis* or *gambeson* (sometimes also called *acton*, *hacqueton*, or *alcoton*, from being stuffed with cotton) would prevent the chain from being carried into the body, the head could not well be padded all round, so as to resist the terrible charge and the penetrating lance-head. The small ring-bound leather helm was insufficient, and the lance-head coming in under the crossed hoops would do much more harm to the warrior than if he had had no helmet at all. The idea of beating sheet iron or steel into a skull-cap does not seem to have struck the Normans, although a small concave plate does appear occasionally to have been affixed to the upper portion of the chain-mail hood. This little shallow cap is sometimes rather pointed, forming a very obtuse cone, and this Meyrick calls a "*chapelle de fer*". Such strengthening of the head-guard seems to have been common, but nothing like what we should call a regular helmet appears. The lower ring of the leathern cap became incorporated with the nasal, and then added to a *chapelle de fer*. Then this seems to have been enlarged, so as to form something more like a helmet; though it is difficult to say, in the

first Norman periods, whether this improved form were really all of metal or of *cuir bouilli*, made into a form somewhat similar to the helmet of our Life Guards, only with a nasal instead of a projecting peak. Much is only conjecture : the probability is that this kind of helmet was not produced until the appearance of the bascinet early in the fourteenth century.

The earliest helmets were somewhat of the shape of a tin saucepan, cylindrical in general form, but cut out in that part where the face was situated. On the seal of Richard the First we find him with such saucepan-like helmet, with a face-guard attached, which Meyrick calls the "*aventayle*". This is also part of a cylinder, and is cut so as to have two openings in it, leaving the rest of the metal to form, as it were, horizontal bars. The two upper corners of this *aventayle* are furnished with rivets, to permit of the visor being raised while the helmet is put on. Such protection for the face appears occasionally to have been added to the chain of the capuchin, or hood of mail. The next step seems to have been to make such a helmet as the cylindrical one just referred to, only large enough to slip on over the head, without involving the necessity of raising any part of the helmet itself. The top then became conical, or at all events convex, instead of being flat; and the sides, and especially that to which the face was addressed, lost something of the rigidly cylindrical form, tapering and curving towards the summit, following, though very slightly, the curve of the head. In the front part of this helmet holes were pierced for the admission of the air, and to permit the champion to see his adversary.

This kind of helmet continued in use till the end of the fifteenth century. A beautiful example of this, once the property of the Black Prince, is to be seen at Canterbury. It was extremely heavy, being made of wrought steel, large enough to descend to the shoulders, where it rested, so that they should bear the greater part of the weight. But besides its own weight, there were superimposed upon it the cap of maintenance, the mantlings, and the crest, often itself an object in metal of some kind, gilt.

Even before the time of the Black Prince, as early as the end of the thirteenth century, these helmets were made to taper ; and there are examples in many of the MSS. of their approaching the form of a curved cone, with the sides descending to the shoulders.

The shields, after the advent of the Normans, became kite-shaped, or had rather the form of the section of a long pear. This extravagant Normanism was very shortly reduced, and a flat shield, almost in the shape of the smooth part of a flat-iron, succeeded. This was afterwards bent longitudinally, so as to curve round the body slightly, a form which was greatly affected by Richard the First. It became longer for a short time under John, but soon grew smaller and more convenient again.

Richard the First wore chain mail in which the lower limbs were encased. The upper part of the body was protected by a short frock of chain mail, with sleeves and hood, over which the cylindrical helmet was placed. On the top of this helmet was the broom plant from which the Plantagenets took their name, and on the shield were the three leopards of England.

The arms in the mail period were chiefly the sword, spear, lance, javelin, arrow, battle-axe, bill or axe on a pole, glaive or long-bladed axe—nearly a cutlass on a pole; the gisarme, a weapon with a cutting edge on one side and a long, bayonet-like arrangement on the other, also mounted on a pole. The Saxon seax gave place to the dagger, which, however, performed the same office equally well.

The great changes in history have never been effected by sudden jumps. There has generally been a succession of slight stages of transition before marked differences between any two eras, however distinguished from each other, have stood forth as specifically marking a period. Thus, calling early English Anglo-Saxon, it is quite impossible to say *when* that Anglo-Saxon became what some denominate semi-Saxon, and when this became modern English. It is quite impossible to draw a line, and say, "In this year men agreed to drop the *en* of the infinitives of verbs and plurals of nouns, and to form all plurals by the addition of *s*." We can trace the gradual process, but we can never say when the change really took place, because it was gradual: so in the history of armour. Chain-mail never became plate, nor was it ever suddenly dropped and plate substituted for it. Small bits of steel were added here and there; while some parts of the body were protected by *cuir bouilli*, and the breast and back were covered with chain.

During the thirteenth century we find small plates added to the armour and worn on the shoulders. These were often distinguished by heraldic devices. They were oblong plates about six or seven inches long by three and

a half or four inches wide. These were called *ailettes.* Caps for the knees were made of boiled leather, pressed into a convex form and covered with gaily-coloured cloth, or more frequently gilt. These were called *genouillères.* At the same time with them we find the elbows covered with elbow-pieces or *coudes*, made of the same material; but these were directly copied in steel in the thirteenth century, and may be said to have been the commencement of plate armour.

Next we find little plates, called *rondels* or *roulettes*, fastened to protect the armpits, the outside of the knee-joint, and the elbows. About the middle of the fourteenth century the thighs were protected by pieces of armour, originally of stout leather, called *cuisses;* these were covered with pourpoint or silk, prettily quilted with gold threads, but they very soon gave way to steel plate.

The lower leg was, quite early in the fourteenth century, encased in armour of *cuir bouilli*, moulded, while soft, to the shape of the leg, and then allowed to harden. This part of armour was called the *jambe*, and was very quickly copied in steel; then the *sollerets*, or jointed armour for the feet, furnished with overlapping plates like those in a lobster's shell, were added.

In the early part of the fourteenth century one of the difficulties about the helmet and its shape appears to have been overcome. A light covering for the head, called a *bascinet*, from its resemblance to a basin, was invented. It had no covering for the face, and the chain-mail armour for the neck was attached to it by a cord which passed all round, traversing the brows, and which was pushed through rings made to project through holes in the steel. This

chain-mail neck-guard was called the *camail*. The great helmet, with the crest and other appendages, was put on *over* the bascinet, so that the weight was something enormous.

The arms were encased in steel armour, called *rere-brace* on the upper arm and *vam-brace* on the fore arm; while the shoulders were covered by overlapping plates very similar in construction to the laminæ of a lobster's tail, and these were called *épaulières*. They were fastened over the hauberk on to the shoulders by laces, called *points*.

During the fantastic reign of Edward the Second, the length of garments worn by civilians was copied by the military, and we find flowing robes projecting from under the armour and sumptuous dresses over it. For some time the custom of emblazoning the arms of a man's family on his surcoat, or garment worn over his armour, originally to protect it from the wet and from the sun, had been growing to an excessive extent. The custom of adopting some favourite animal, or other object in the outer world, whether animate or not, as a distinctive mark emblematical of a man's name, or commemorative of some anecdote connected with his family, had been familiar to our Scandinavian forefathers. Personal peculiarities had procured them nicknames, and these nicknames became recognised as family designations. Thus Harold Blue Tooth, Harold Hárfagra, and similar appellations, became the usual mode of speaking of such men. When it became difficult to recognise leaders in battle on account of the face being hidden by the nasal helmet and the chin by the lower part of the chain-mail hood, confusion often arose from the ignorance of a chieftain's followers as to whether he were

still living or not. William the First, at Hastings, was thought by the Norman army, at one period of the battle, to be slain, and a sort of panic was the result, which nearly gave *us* the day. If he had worn some distinguishing badge inseparably connected with him, as the broom plant or *plantagenista* was with Henry the Second and his descendants, this danger would have been avoided.

As soon as the system of heraldic distinctions was fairly started, a fresh impetus to the noble art of war seemed given. There was something captivating in the idea of knowing the arms and insignia of all the families bearing them, as well as in possessing the means of making such brilliant and elegant display, and not only was the crest worn on the helmet and the cognizance on the shield, but the surcoat became covered with the devices forming the arms, fairly embroidered on silk or fine woollen cloth, with gold and silver threads, and in all the colours of the rainbow.

This circumstance causes the actual armour for the body to be invisible, being covered by the emblazoned surcoats, thus converted into "coats of arms".

Meyrick is of opinion that a breastplate was worn under the hauberk, which piece of armour he calls a *plastron de fer*. But there seem grounds for believing that this piece of armour was also called hauberk as well as the frock made of little rings to which we have already seen the word applied. Chaucer, in enumerating the pieces of armour worn by Sir Thopas uses these expressions in such a way as to justify this assumption. The verses are the following :—

"He dede next his white lere
Of cloth of lake, white and clere,
A brech and eek a schert ;
And next his schert an aketoun,
And over that a haberjaun,
For persyng of his hert ;
And over that a fine hauberk
Was all i-wrought of Jewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate ;
And over that his cote armour,
As white as is a lily flour,
In which he wold debate.
His sheld was all of gold so red,
And thereinne was a bores hed,
A chanbocle by his side.
And ther he swor on ale and bred
How that the geaunt schall be deed,
Betyde what betyde.
His jambeux were of quirboily,
His swerdes schethe of yvory,
His helm of latoun bright ;
His sadel was of rowel boon,
His bridel as the sonne schon,
Or as the moone light ;
His spere was of fine cipres,
That bodeth werre and no thing pees,
The heed ful scharp i-ground."

The habergeon is, according to all authorities, a diminutive of hauberk, having no sleeves, and coming to the waist. The hauberk, on the other hand, was the larger garment, capable of protecting even the neck, breast, and thighs, descending below the knee. All these various kinds of armour were composed of little rings.

Chaucer describes the dressing of the hero all clearly and intelligibly enough. The aketon is the under-garment worn to keep the rings from fraying the linen or irritating

the body. He speaks of the "haberjaun" as guarding against the piercing of his heart,—"And over that a fine hauberk . . . i-wrought of Jewes work, Ful strong it was of plate", which would lead us to suppose that in Chaucer's time the words had changed their signification from their original meaning, and that habergeon is meant by him to apply to a hauberk of rings worn under a breastplate of plate-armour called hauberk, "full strong of plate". I think it very likely that, as armour meant heraldic emblazonment in Chaucer's day, hauberk meant what we call armour in general and the breastplate in particular.

The *cote* armour, or surcoat tabard, conceals this from the view, so that we have nothing to guide us but conjecture on consulting the MSS. And here, again, philology helps us, by showing how very improbable it would be for the expression "coat armour" to be applied to the blazoned surcoat and to the steel beneath it. I am therefore inclined to think that the hauberk was really that piece of plate-armour called by Meyrick the *plastron de fer*.

This view of the question is further warranted by the appearance of the knights in the time of Edward III, when the extravagant garments and flowing robes of the last reign give place to short, well-fitting tabards or surcoats, emblazoned with the arms of the warrior. The round, accurate fit of the portion guarding the breast gives token of the rigidity of plate-armour, while from under this shortened surcoat, reaching now but little below the hips, the skirt of chain mail is visible.

During this period, especially before the shortening of the exuberant garments worn during the reign of Edward

II, the weight of the full war-panoply must have been something frightful. The acton, or hacqueton, was in itself no mean load to carry, and very often was used without the additional chain-mail, being considered in many cases quite defence enough: but generally over this came the habergeon or breastplate, then the heavy shirt of iron rings, upon which were fixed the various pieces of heavy steel referred to; in the reign of Edward II, a strange, dressing-gown-looking sort of garment, called a *cyclas*, was added; and finally the surcoat covered the whole. The head was defended with the visorless bascinet, over which the heavy helmet was dropped like an extinguisher; and the man was armed. No wonder that knights fainted away on all sides in warm weather! No wonder that when the horses stumbled and fell at Bannockburn by reason of the pit-falls, caltraps, and other comforts prepared for them by the canny Scots, their riders became an easy prey to the active, light-armed enemy, who could dissect his fallen foe as easily as an English sailor can dispose of a turtle when once turned over on its heavily armed back.

So the appearance of a warrior in 1315 was very different from that of one in 1340, although the actual armour worn might have been the very same. Edward III was a soldier, and soon rejected every portion of the military dress that might encumber the warrior or impede his free motions in fight. The thickly-quilted hacqueton gave way to a simple leathern jerkin, still called the acton; and in the beginning of the next century, the advantage of a light helmet having been recognised, a visor was added to the bascinet. This visor has made its mark

on history from the grotesqueness of its form. It had the shape of a swine's snout, and the bascinet to which it was affixed was known as the pig-faced bascinet. There is a MS. representing two women fighting, and wearing this strange head-dress; and it has been suggested that the queer legend of the "pig-faced lady" may have arisen out of such a representation.

The arms in the fourteenth century were the lance, the battle-axe, the mace, the sword, and dagger for knights; and bows, arrows, spears, bills, glaives, gisarmes, military flails, and slings, for the inferior soldiers. The "morning star" was revived at this time. There were two forms of this pretty toy, one consisting of a stout staff, to which, by means of a long socket, a ball of iron three or four inches in diameter was fixed; this ball, being furnished with sharp spikes, projecting, like the "quills upon the fretful porcupine", in all directions, was admirably adapted to defeat the uses of plate armour. The second form shows us the same staff, with the same socket; the latter, however, was connected with the spiked ball by a chain, thus forming as tremendous a whip as could well be conceived. The spikes of the ball suggested the poetic name of the "morning star". It was a grim old German weapon of the seventh century, revived in the classic age when Chaucer and Gower were morning stars in our literature, and so German as to have been known in England by its German name, as the *morgenstern*, quite as well as by its English equivalent.

The sword of a knight was carried in a sword-belt partly hidden by the splendid baldric which marked the knightly rank as much as the gilt spurs. The plain

leathern belt being concealed from sight, the appearance was as though the baldric supported the sword. The dagger worn on the right side seemed to balance the sword; and from the compact and neat appearance of the man in his armour, the hilts of the two weapons looked almost like the handles on each side of a symmetrical vase.

The fanciful folly of the reign of Richard II—of which he, poor fellow, was rather the exponent than the creator—produced nothing new in the way of defensive armour, although we might have expected some change on account of the introduction of gunpowder and the use of firearms; the only innovation being the conical visor added to the bascinet, to which allusion has just been made as the "pig-faced bascinet".

The convenience of wearing chain mail was too apparent, and it seems to have held its own against further innovations, until in the beginning of the fifteenth century we find an addition to the armour of overlapping plates descending nearly to the hips. These, like the breast and back plates, were now worn *over* the chain. The knight in armour appears to have worn complete plate quite early in the century, the skirt of mail being covered with these overlapping plates, for which Meyrick informs us the name was *tace*. The *taces* did not come down quite so low as the chain-mail skirt, which is shown projecting beneath. The *cuisses* were made of steel, while the *jambe* and the *solleret*, or armour for the foot, as well as the gauntlets, were all of plate. The collar formed by the back and breast plates was made high, to protect the throat; and the back of the bascinet was made longer, so as to protect

the back of the neck in case the knight should feel inclined to fight without the heavy helmet,—which, however, was rarely done.

The *camail* was discarded, and there is every reason to believe that, the breastplate being worn outside, the chain-mail hauberk was discarded too; a skirt of chain being appended to the breast and backplates. The inconvenience and weight of the *taces* induced warriors to discontinue the lower plates altogether, and a curious contrivance succeeded. Smaller pieces of armour, shaped somewhat like pointed tiles, and hence called *tuilettes*, being attached by straps and buckles, depended from the lower *tace*, and, by means of the straps, permitted the knight to sit on horseback or stand erect, without having any portion of his person undefended. The aperture in the breastplate, made to admit of the play of the arm in action, was defended by a small, lozenge-shaped piece of chain-mail called a *gusset*, attached to the inside edge of the plate. This was further protected by the *palettes*, or *roulettes*, of the thirteenth century.

The demand for these gussets of chain-mail was considerable during the wars of Henry V, and to this circumstance we must ascribe the great dearth of chain-mail remains. All the old hauberks were cut up for these little "stop-gaps", and no new suits of chain were made. The very few that escaped this fate were those used by our own kings together with the plate-armour, as being more secure in the whole piece than in such gusset form. There is a striking example of this in the Tower.

The fifteenth century may be described emphatically as the era of plate-armour. Chain-mail was not done away

with suddenly, nor was plate adopted at once. The growth of the one defence was the cause of the decline of the other; and in the latter part of the fifteenth century, in the reigns of Henry VI, Richard III, and Henry VII, plate-armour reached its culminating point.

When the inconvenience of the *camail*, or chain-mail gorget, became palpable, and a desire was shown to arm the man completely in plate, it was a natural step, in the history of our subject, for a gorget of plate to appear; and we find it occurring in the first half of the century, worn together with an extraordinary kind of helmet called a *sallet*, derived by Meyrick from salad-bowl. He was most likely led to this derivation from the punning allusion made by Shakespeare to sallet as salad. It is far more probable that the name came through the Italian *celata*, from the Latin *cælata*, "carved or cut out", in allusion to the many curves and cuts presented by this new form of head-guard. It was remarkable for the projecting back and abruptly sharp descent in front, where the aperture for the face was protected by a visor provided with a horizontal slit for the admission of light and air. If you take a modern felt-hat or wide-awake, turn down the brim, cut it quite off at the face and shape it into a peak behind, you will have some idea of a *sallet*. This very curious helmet was fastened on by means or attachments inside, which connected it with the gorget, and the union of these separate pieces of armour gave the first hint for the manufacture of the helmet of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Sometimes the visor was not used, and the *sallet* descended somewhat lower, and was furnished with the slit for light and air made in the piece itself.

The extravagances of the civil dress were copied in the armour without the actual garments of every-day life being added to the military dress, as was the case in Edward the Second's reign. In the early part of the fifteenth century the follies done in leather and cloth were perpetuated in steel. The long toes of the civil shoes were reproduced in long-toed *sollerets*,—so long, indeed, that walking in them was out of the question. About this time, too, the *épaulières* were supplemented with a piece of steel coming over the breastplate and rendering the *palettes* or *roulettes* useless by shielding the weak part in the armour, formerly protected by the gussets. The new shoulder-pieces were called *pauldrons* (from the French *épaul*). They continued to be worn to the end of the seventeenth century.

The wars of the Roses taking place on English ground, among English people and between English leaders, very naturally brought the armourer's trade to high perfection in England; and the sumptuous extravagance of Edward the Fourth was soon seen in the grand restoration of military games called "tournaments", which had been so much in vogue in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

At this period a curious addition was made to the armour for the face, in the form of a chin-guard called the *mentonnière*, which, with the *sallet* well depressed, effectually shielded the knight from blows aimed directly at his face. This was chiefly used at tournaments, for which the armour was much stronger than for war. Justs, or jousts, were greatly liked at this time. They were fought between two combatants, whereas the tournament was fought by many on each side. The gradual approach to perfection in the

helmet now culminated in the beautiful productions of which specimens are preserved in the Mediæval Room at the British Museum, and in still greater number at the Tower. The armourer's art had advanced, and his skill in beating plates of steel into globular forms enabled him to produce a helmet uniting the gorget, bascinet, visor, and mentonnière in one. The curve at the back of the head, commenced in the *sallet*, was continued with greater skill in the new piece of armour, which was contrived so as to open below upon two pivots, one on each side. The neck part being thus opened, the helmet was lowered by the attendant squire, or lady, and then firmly secured by small cabin-hooks, as we should call them. The lower part of the face was protected by the beaver and the upper part by the visor.

Instead of the little *tuilettes*, two large pieces of armour, formed by horizontal plates and called *tassets*, were hung from the *taces* just below the breastplate, and each of these was thus made to protect part of the abdomen and the thigh, which was further protected by a *cuisse* of steel.

The physical deformities attributed to Richard III have been referred to as being the cause of the inordinate puffing, padding, and fantastic trimmings of the civil dress in his time; this was copied in the armour of the fashionable warrior, as usual, and we find the *pauldrons* especially scalloped and elaborated into enormous fan-shaped appendages, very strange to behold. The armour of Sir Thomas Beauchamp is a remarkable instance of this. The best representation of it is given in Meyrick's *Critical Inquiry into Ancient Arms and Armour*. The *genouillères* and elbow-pieces are ornamented with similar additions to

their strength and weight. They were not infrequently wrought into the form of griffin's wings.

The splendour of the plate-armour of this period is something for a painter to dwell on; and although for fighting on foot there was little use for such a suit, yet, on a well-equipped war-horse, the figure of such a warrior must have been, next to the Anglo-Saxon warrior in his gold helm and eagle's wings, the most imposing that can be imagined. I give the preference to the early English or Saxon warrior, because he *was* English, and disdained the use of much armour, just as he despised walls as a means of defence. The armour of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, enclosing the warrior in a tower of steel, was more or less an Italian invention; and, true to his text, the Teuton attacked and destroyed the Roman wall by the invention of gunpowder, which, as it became more and more used in war, rendered armour useless; for as at the present day there is a constant struggle going on between the inventors of armour and the contrivers of big guns, so even then we find it true that no armour could be invented without some big gun being manufactured to smash it.

Among the queer fancies indulged in by the dandies of the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, we find a very droll one of pleating the jerkin or tunic down the back in such a manner as to make the back of a gentleman resemble an open fan, with the handle at the small of the said back, the pleats becoming less thickly folded towards the shoulders, where the garment was smooth and flat. At the waist the skirt opened out in a similar fan-like manner, only downwards. This fashion was actually copied in the rigid steel. Nor was

this all: the *cuisses*, or armour for the thighs, the *tassets*, or armour connecting the *taces* below the breastplate with the legs—all these, nay sometimes even the rere-brace and vam-brace of the arms, were fluted so as to represent the puckering of the cloth in the civil dress. This is a peculiarity of the reign of Henry VII.

When armour had thus reached its zenith of perfection nothing was to be done to improve it save adding to the ornamentation, and here begins a very curious part of our subject, namely, the engraving and gilding of plate-armour. As might have been expected, this was an Italian custom, for the Italians showed themselves very ready to adopt the idea of armour and very able in decorating it. We find exquisite engravings representing scenes from classical history, or from the mythology of Greece and Rome. We find these scenes over-running the armour like the pattern in a lady's dress, or the decorations of our walls and fire-places. Sometimes beautiful lines are traced from which other lines branch off, and at the junction of two or more of these, little medallions are introduced, representing various scenes in a story or myth which the whole suit is made to tell. Often the lines made by the graving-tool are filled in with gold, which when polished with the steel has a very curious effect. A wonderful specimen of engraved armour is preserved in the Tower armoury, which was presented by Maximilian of Germany to Henry VIII on his marriage with Catherine of Aragon. The rose and the pomegranate entwine through the whole of the suit, which is perhaps the most beautiful specimen of plate-armour extant, while little compartments for the pictures

are marked off all over the metal, and well repay the student an hour's study.

I have told you that the armour for the tournament was stronger than that for actual war, by the addition of certain extra pieces. These pieces, at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, were :—

(*a*) The *grande garde*, which was a thicker breastplate, screwed by three stout screws and nuts to the breastplate itself. Through this came the *rest*, a piece of iron on a hinge, fixed firmly to the breastplate, though frequently attached to the *grande garde*. This fitted into a hole at the bottom of the lance, which, by means of the hinge, could be raised or depressed, but remained in its place on the knight's breast all the same.

(*b*) The *mentonnière*, or chin defence, was sometimes united to the *grande garde*, and the complex piece was called the *grande garde à la mentonnière*.

(*c*) The *garde de bras*. The lance was supplied with a guard just above the grip, and this guard was considered sufficient to protect the right side of the champion. But as the combatants rushed at each other the left side was without such a protection. To meet this want a piece of armour was screwed on to the left arm, called the *garde de bras*.

(*d*) As the object of each warrior was either to throw his opponent off his horse or to strike his helmet so as to disable him by stunning him, an extra piece was screwed on to the breastplate to protect the chin and beaver of the helmet. This was called the *volante pièce*.

(*e*) Occasionally large pieces of armour called "sockets"

were fixed to the saddle on each side, as extra protection for the thighs at a tournament, but their use does not seem to have been general.

At this time also, the horse began to be provided with defensive armour, but this became more and more the fashion in the time of Henry VIII, whose armour presented to him by Maximilian was accompanied by similar panoply, engraved to match his own, for the horse. To see this suit of armour alone is quite enough to repay anybody for a visit to the Tower.

The warlike, extravagant, pleasure-loving Henry VIII was a great encourager of the armourer. He was himself fond of tilting, was a good swordsman, and a good soldier all round. He invented breech-loaders and a kind of revolver. Many of the guns of his time are preserved in the Tower. The "hagbut", or gun fired from a rest, became known at this period. It came from Germany, and the name is a corruption of *haken-büchse*, from *haken*, a hook, the stand or rest from which it was fired, and *büchse*, a gun. The word is also found as harquebuse, and people not acquainted with the history of the weapon have sought to trace it in some way or other from the French *arc*, a bow, inasmuch as it superseded the true English weapon.

Henry amused himself by inventing complicated weapons, as, for example, a battle-axe, the handle of which was a gun; a linstock for discharging cannon, but which was at the same time a spear. Being a great lover of state, he copied the halberds of the Pope's guards, which are also of German origin, and bear a German name meaning "the axe for the hall"—*bard* being an axe, *halle*, a hall. The "partizan", a form of spear with two small projections, one on each

side of the chief point or blade, was introduced at this time, and also a somewhat similar weapon, called a "spetum".

The puffing and slashing of the civil dress, a custom of German origin, was, as usual, transferred from cloth to metal, and the taces with the tassets were succeeded by a gorgeous imitation of the pleated skirt, descending like a kilt from the waist to the knee. The weight of such an iron skirt was enormous, and it could only be worn on horseback. This portion of armour was called the "lamboys". The suit presented by Maximilian to Henry is furnished with this curious addition, which I do not think ever became common in England.

At this period there was an addition made to the armour in the form of two perpendicular ridges, fixed on the pauldrons so as to assist in the protection of the neck, which was liable to injury from a sword-blow gliding off from the smooth surface of the pauldron and cutting in at the part where the helmet joined the gorget, or where it reached the shoulders. These pieces stood up on each side from the pauldrons, and formed a sort of outwork to the fortification of the neck. They were called "pass-guards". They continued all through the reign of Henry VIII, and were not finally disused until the time of Charles I.

The names of the pieces of armour for the horse were:

1. The *chamfron*, for the face.
2. The *manefaire*, for the neck.
3. The *testere*, two small plates connecting the chamfron with the manefaire.
4. The *croupière*.

Besides these, Meyrick refers to *estivals* for the horse's legs, and *flanchères* for the sides.

In the time of Elizabeth we find soldiers armed with breastplate, backplate, and very wide tassets just coming half-way down the thigh, or not even so low as that. The head is protected by a morion, a new style of helmet something like those now made of pith or cork for Indian use, but of very heavy iron, and surmounted by a ridge or comb, higher in the centre than at the back and front. The pike begins to play an important part, and the pikemen, armed as I have described, were made to stand a very severe drill. This kind of half-armour was much affected by all classes, though whole suits were worn; but in that case long tassets were used, coming from the breastplate to the knee.

The breastplate was made with a *tapul*, that is, a sort of edge in front, as our Life Guards wear them, whereas in the times of Henry VII and Richard they had been globular.

The gradual increase in the use of the matchlock, wheel-lock, and other kinds of fire-arms, especially of the dag and the petronel, both something between a carbine and a pistol, and yet like neither, threatened destruction to the armourer's trade. But at the accession of James I, armour seemed to be looking up again. He affected the tournament, and, to look big, had a hollow tilting lance made, called a *burden*, which was a very light one after all. The long tassets coming to the knee remained all through this period. They were worn by Charles I and Charles II. There is in the Tower of London a beautiful suit of armour presented by the Goldsmiths' Company to Charles I. It is very richly engraved and highly gilt. In the civil wars the pot helmet, of which there are innumerable specimens in the Tower, superseded

the morion; the pikeman still wore the breastplate, back-plate, and wide tassets that had been in vogue when Elizabeth was queen, though they were somewhat modified. Armour for the lower leg gave way to the heavy boot, which developed into the jack-boot of James the Second's time, when, save the cuirass, as the breast and back-plates together were now called, armour was dead.

In the civil wars the Cavaliers affected a new kind of helmet called the *casque*, having a movable set of plates at the nape of the neck; ear-guards, called *oreillettes;* and from a peak in front there descended a guard for the face, consisting of a thin bar of iron about the size of the face, having two other bars parallel to each other fixed within, gridiron fashion. The Cavaliers indulged in plumes affixed to these casques, which being of various colours, gave great offence to the Roundheads. They also wore the long tassets to which I have referred when speaking of the time of James I, but the *jambe* gave way entirely to the cavalry boot.

In the narrow space of one Lecture it is impossible to do more than attempt a very crude sketch of my subject. The lessons it teaches are:—Firstly, that the war between the Romance and Teutonic races is exemplified in arms and armour, the former, from the big sword down to gunpowder, being mostly of Germanic origin, while, save the hauberk, helm, and shield, all parts of defensive armour were, broadly speaking, Romance; secondly, that England has hitherto not been behind the world in her means of defence, whether active or passive. The passive phase, that of armour, is dead as far as men are concerned; but active defence is another thing, and I trust

we shall find that undying within us. In the good old plate-armour days of Queen Elizabeth she rode down to Tilbury to give us courage to resist the Spaniard on our coasts, and we now have a queen ten times more deeply set in our hearts than any that ever breathed. I do not think she would need say much to arm us in the defence of the far greater Britain over which she rules. But if she should utter the words that must set all hearts bounding with zeal in her cause, she would see her subjects themselves forming an impenetrable panoply through which no enemy should ever be able to wound her or mar the glorious empire of which she is the fitting exponent.

Lecture V.

THE CIVIL DRESS OF THE ENGLISH.

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In the grand march of the Aryans westward from their distant aboriginal home in the realms of the rising sun, they brought with them the language, arts, and thoughts of the land of their birth. As they spread, or, rather, as one wave of Aryan life surged on after another, the original orientalism became modified more and more, partly by the influence of climate, partly by the circumstance of removal from the fountain-head of all such life, and consequent subjection of the norm to decay and destruction from various causes, external as well as internal.

Whoever has been in Bombay will remember the long, flowing robes of certain castes of Brahmins; the curious custom of never exposing the hair to public view, strictly adhered to by the Parsee women at the present day. He will remember the short tunic of the warrior, reaching to the knee, and worn together with his flowing robes and other dandifications, but not employed in every-day life. In these apparently trifling matters he will see the prototype of our own Rock and Mantle, and of the Romance Tunic and Robe.

The tunic of the classical schools was originally an under-garment of fine linen worn by both sexes under

the more distinguishing toga and palla; and because the word is of Latin origin we adopt it instead of using our own indigenous terms.

The tunic, or rather rock, of the Scandinavian English was a garment descending to the knee, and generally supplied with sleeves coming down to the wrists. It was made of the finest linen, and the name is probably derived from the term applied to the spinning-wheel in general, though properly meaning only the distaff for the reception of the flax. Thus, instead of saying a "flax", the garment was called a rock, or distaff, *quasi* the production of distaff labour. The verb "to rock" is from the same root, the backward and forward motion it describes being connected with the action of using the rock. In Scotland, a party of young women met to spin together is called a "*rockin*". Another garment worn under the rock, and in some cases over it, was called the "pad", hence the expression, *salo-pád*, dark-coated. From this word our own "padding" is derived, on account of the pad being worn under the byrnie, as the acton was under the hauberk in later times. Certainly it was not of such general use as the rock, which lives to-day in the name for a man's coat and a woman's gown all over Germany and Scandinavia, as it formerly lived in England when we spoke English without any base alloy of the Latin element.

We wore the rock or tunic when we came to Britain, and we continued to call it by that name for seven hundred years, while the Scandinavians and Germans, more national than we, retain the word to the present day.

The garments of the ladies were, in the early English or Anglo-Saxon times, more simple than those of the men.

They wore extremely fine underclothing of linen, shoes and stockings; then we have records of the gunna or gown, the rock, and the over-slop. The general term for clothing was *hrægl*, which lived on into the last century in the word "night-rail".

As a curious monument of the tenth century, having special reference to ladies' dress, I give you an extract from the Will of an English lady named Wynflæd. This document is remarkable as showing the various articles of highest estimation in the eyes of the ladies of England a thousand years ago.

"And she bequeaths to Æthelflæd her daughter her graven neck-ring and her mantle, preon (brooch), and the land at Ebbesborne. . . . To Eadwold she bequeaths two boxes, and therein one bed furniture, all that belongs to a bed. And she bequeaths to Æthelflæd, Ethhelm's daughter, Ælphere's younger daughter (as a slave), and her double lamb's-wool kirtle, and another of linen or linen-web. And to Eadgifa two boxes, and therein her best bed wall-hanging, and a linen rug, and all the bedclothes which thereto belong, and her best dun tunic, and her better mantle, and her two wooden spotted cups, and her old wire brooch, and one wall-hanging and another short one, and three seat coverings. And she gives to Ceoldryth whichever she likes best of her black tunics, and her best holy veil and her best binder. And to Æthelflæd her open walking kirtle and cuffs and binders; and let Æthelflæd afterwards find one of her nun's habits, the best she can, for Wulfflæd."

I cull only those parts of this long and exhaustive Will which have reference to the subject of dress, omitting

the mention of the various individuals, cooks and others, whom she bequeaths, and of others to whom she gives their freedom. These items, although highly interesting and instructive to the student of the manners and customs of our forefathers and our foremothers, not bearing directly on dress, do not fall within the scope of this Lecture ; but I would strongly recommend to such as desire to know more of these subjects, to obtain the excellent collection of such documents now publishing by my friend, Mr. Walter de Gray Birch, of the British Museum, in the form of a book entitled *Cartularium Saxonicum*.

The dyes made use of by the Anglo-Saxons seem to have been of the brightest. Certainly, to judge from the MSS., they must have been gay and varied in the extreme. Purple, blue, red, brown, yellow, green, and violet vied with each other in forming the living parterre. Nor do we find much change resulting from the introduction of Christianity. The pagan cross as a brooch was, of course, discontinued, and some forms of necklace were abandoned as savouring too much of pagan taste. To the pagan preon succeeded the *spúngé*, of which there are magnificent specimens, richly adorned with precious gems, in the British Museum.

In our pagan days the ladies wore very beautiful necklaces made of brilliantly coloured beads, among which amber beads were introduced as special remedies against the attacks of the black elves and other supernatural foes. It is a curious circumstance that a necklace of beads, also supplied with amber, should have been used by nuns in the early Christian phase of English life, as a safeguard against the attacks of the demons by whom the

"Swart Alvar" were succeeded. Beads of baked clay, gorgeously coloured, are to be seen in the Anglo-Saxon room of the British Museum; and, what is very curious, the châtelaine of some thirty years back was worn by our foremothers before the Norman usurpation. Finger-rings were more affected by the ladies than the men, but the bracelets of the women were nothing like so massive or so magnificent as those of the men. Gold fringe of exquisite workmanship, as well made as it is possible for it to be now by any military accoutrement maker, has been found in Saxon graves, looking as fresh as if made yesterday. Sometimes, instead of fringe, broad borders of strongly gilt leather were added to the edges of the garment, giving a splendid finish to a magnificent dress.

As I have mentioned in other places, a distinguishing mark of the dress of early Englishwomen was the unaffected modesty of the whole costume. The entire figure is scrupulously draped, and even the hair concealed by the envious wimple. Where we find representations of English women without this national head-dress, the hair is shown carefully plaited in two tails, something like those worn by the Germans now.

The wimple was a kind of shawl, made of cloth or silk, and worn over the head or shoulders, covering the throat and very often the chin. It was worn out of doors by ladies, and, in fact, by women of all classes of the community. It is a purely Teutonic word, living in Swedish, Danish, Icelandic, Dutch, English, and German. It denoted originally a flag or pennon, still called, in modern German a *wimpel*. To arrange it properly was evidently a great art, for we find it folded in all possible fashions and

ways. Christianity could not keep it out of the convent, any more than it could the necklace, nor could there be any plea against its admission, for it served in fact as a nun's veil.

An early English lady in her gown and super-tunic (as the over-slop was called later on), both of rich but different colours, and with a tastefully folded wimple, the edges of both gown and tunic richly gilt, the wimple of yet another colour, white or yellow, edged with brilliant gold fringe, as glittering as the epaulettes of our day, would present to her daughters of the Victorian age a model of neatness with splendour, modesty and taste, forming perfection in female dress. Before the Norman usurpation there had been no scrunching the ribs to torture a poor girl into that invention of the devil—a waist. And here I speak advisedly and by the book, for the only picture in any MS. earlier than the twelfth century bearing witness to the constriction barbarously produced by stays, is in an illumination of the eleventh century, representing the devil in this machine, or at all events in a female dress with a low, pointed body laced up the front. I think, if our ladies were to know to whom they were indebted for this fashion, they would return to the more elegant style of their own foremothers.

Much has been said, and more has been written, about the wonderful changes introduced by the Normans, our historians seeming rather proud of the humiliation which the Norman usurpation of the English crown undoubtedly was. But as Sir Frederick Madden, Max Müller, Dr. Morriss, and other eminent philologists have shown with respect to the language, so it may be shown in a similar way

that there were no important changes in English dress produced by these invaders. It is true they called English things by Norman names, and those whose interest it was to flatter the rulers adopted such words; but the articles remained the same. The wimple was not rudely torn from the heads of the ladies. On the contrary, Norman women adopted it under the new name of the *couvre-chef*, *chef* being Norman slang for the head. *Couvre-chef* exists in a maltreated form (as if the English had taken it between their teeth and worried it) in our "ker-chief", and still more wonderful word, having no sense whatever, of "hand-ker-chief," something intended to cover the head used for the hand. The further elaboration of "pocket-hand-ker-chief" is something quite unique in the history of hybrids.

The Normans called the wimple a *couvre-chef;* the over-slop, a super-tunic; the gunna, a robe, and so forth; but a mere change in nomenclature surely gives no claim to invention. They adopted the wimple from the Anglo-Saxons, but they effected no change in that article of dress by giving it another name; while the slight modifications which took place in its form and mode of arrangement gave the innovators no claim as inventors. The coif, also, was a head-covering ascribed to the Normans, but this was a German invention, called in German a *kuffe*. It must therefore not be confounded with the Norman form of the wimple, although the *word* became Gallicised into *coiffure*, *coiffette*, and other expressions similarly compounded.

Now, all this tends to establish what I have already, on perfectly different grounds, asserted to be true, namely,

that the actual manners, customs, dress, and habits of our forefathers were not so much affected by the Norman usurpation as historians would have us believe. Certainly, English women, after the so-called Conquest, were less conquered by the Normans than they had been before; and though the court language, and that of the parasites who fawned on Duke William, affected to describe things by barbarous French names, the things themselves remained English to the last. For although the "robe" was made to fit the figure, it was the same thing as the gunna, slightly modified. And I must admit, while accusing the Normans of the villainy of stays, that the figure to which I allude, after all, wears only a laced dress. These did not become common, and we find even royal ladies in their tombs represented in natural, undeformed gowns and girdles, in a natural position. The women of England were, all through the Norman period, English, and could hardly be expected to become their own enemies in adopting Norman customs. The only evidence we have at all in favour of such a supposition lies in the fact of the Norman poets using Norman-French to describe English matters; and at this we are not entitled to be surprised.

The strange custom affected by the Normans of shaving the back of the head as well as the whole of the face, led the English spies sent out just before the battle of Hastings to conclude that the Norman army was a horde of priests. This custom was never adopted by the English; and we find the Normans in England during the short reign of William Rufus abused by their own writers for going to the opposite extreme, and wearing the hair too long. The king's own love of extravagance set the example

and superinduced a love of out-of-the-way fashions. The rock, now called the tunic, became lengthened and worn fuller, with wide and ungainly sleeves; while the long garment of state, with the inner linen robe, trailed on the ground like a lady's train of the present day. Sleeves were made to cover the whole hand, though gloves were worn, as they had been by the Anglo-Saxons on high and state occasions.

The mantles of the nobles were lined with rich fur, and we find two kinds of mantles noticed, the shorter of which was called the rheno. But this custom was a purely Scandinavian one, and the English in (what I am obliged to call, for the sake of distinction) the Anglo-Saxon times, are known to have worn the long mantle coming down to mid-leg on state occasions, and the short cloak, covering the shoulders and hardly reaching to the waist, for war and the chase.

A Norman innovation was the ridiculous custom of wearing pointed shoes, with such absurd length of toes as to call down bitter invectives from the monkish clergy, to whom they were forbidden. The invention of these monstrosities accords well with the strange propensity, to which I have elsewhere alluded, which the Normans showed to lengthen everything. They lengthened the tunic, the shield, the nasal of the helmet, the sword, the surcoat, and, in fact, every portion of the dress of the time. To them, as being emphatically cavalry men, the length of their dress and accoutrements was a matter of indifference so long as their horses could carry them.

A story is told of Henry I, when in Normandy, setting forth how a certain bishop preached so stoutly against the

fashion of wearing long hair, that the king was moved to tears. The bishop, seeing the point he had made, produced a pair of scissors from some portion of his dress and "cropped the whole congregation".* This was followed by a brief period of short hair; but in Stephen's time the flowing locks of the nobility again brought down the censure of the priests,—this time, however, without success; for we learn that courtiers permitted their hair to grow until they resembled women rather than men; and those to whom nature had denied luxuriant growth of hair, were fain to have recourse to art to produce the effect required by fashion. Whether the dandies of those days added to their hair as the Chinese do, by fixing the supplementary locks in the direction of their length to those already growing, or whether they wore downright wigs in the time of Stephen, as Planché seems to think, I cannot take upon me to decide. It is a curious subject for inquiry.

The Norman rage for lengthening everything at last seems to have affected the female dress, inasmuch as we find illustrations representing ladies with sleeves elongated to such an extent as to render it necessary for the wearers to tie them up in knots, to avoid treading upon them. In some of the MSS. we find the sleeves curiously treated. Occasionally they are made to look like little boats; other MSS. show us what Strutt calls pocket-sleeves, because they are so tied up as to be made receptacles for various light articles. The wimple is occasionally discarded, and then we find the hair dressed in absurdly long plaits, not infrequently bound round with silk wrappings.

Thus far we have been guided by the MSS. in the

* Planché, *History of British Costume*, p. 73.

British Museum, but now we are enabled to gain a more accurate idea of the costume of the more important members of society, whose rank entitled them to have their effigies sculptured on their tombs in the dress worn during life. Monumental effigies commence at the end of the twelfth century. The earliest English monument of the kind is that of Henry II at Fontrevaud, in Normandy, and from this we gather that the coronation robes of the first three Plantagenets—Henry II, Richard I, and John—were composed of two tunics (the upper with loose sleeves, called a dalmatica) of nearly equal lengths, and girded round the waist by a rich belt, over which was worn the mantle, splendidly embroidered ; the crown, the sword, the jewelled gloves, boots, and spurs without rowels. The same dress was worn also on state occasions.

Great magnificence prevailed in the state habits of the nobility, and mantles with dagged, or jagged edges or borders, became prevalent to such a degree that a law was enacted prohibiting people under a certain rank from wearing them.

The Plantagenets, or rather the first three Plantagenets, were, of course, Normans; they used Norman-French in conversation. They designated the coverings for the lower leg *chausses*, as before, but the word "hose" occurs in a wardrobe roll of the time of John, and this is employed in the same document with the French word and the Latin *caligæ :* thus showing that even at so early a time as the end of the twelfth century English was not only holding its own, and encroaching on the Latin of the court and clergy, but actually superseding Norman words in Norman documents.

The cross-garterings or trellis-work of the Scandinavian English appear at this period on a magnificent scale, those of King John being formed of narrow strips of richly gilt leather, or of cloth of gold. These strips are very much narrower than those of the early English, and form a much more minute lozenge-shaped pattern by their intersection; while in the centre of the lozenge so formed a stud of gold is introduced, forming a kind of golden vestment which must have been dazzling to behold. This kind of stocking extended from the extreme point of the toe all the way up the leg. Gloves were worn of a fabulously gorgeous kind by kings and other persons of exalted position. They were edged with gold, and at the back of the hand an enormous jewel was inserted.

In the dress of the ladies we find the wimple mentioned by the old English name again. The long gown seems generally and distinguishingly to be of green cloth; and the Norman *capa*, or mantle with a hood, is said to have been of the same colour.

During the thirteenth century great magnificence prevailed in the dress of the nobility and of the ladies. There are some new expressions employed relating to the cut and to the material of dress, which require special notice. First there is a garment called a *quintis*, or *cointise*, of which, however, I can give you no idea save that the name is borrowed from the French *quinte*, meaning a queer fancy, or a caprice; so that the garment, whatever it was—tunic, or gown, or surcoat—may be translated by the name "whimsey". Planché thinks it applied to the short cloaks with jagged edges which were forbidden to the common sort as early as 1188, and continued to crop up every now and again at various times. This, of course, is only conjec-

ture. Matthew Paris speaks of "vestments of silk, commonly called cointises", as existing in 1251. Velvet is called *villosa* and *villuse;* and a rich stuff called "cyclas", with which we are familiar in classic studies, reappears in a new form, giving its name to a garment like a dalmatica, or super-tunic, worn by both sexes. The use of furs as linings for ceremonial garments became very common in this century, and doubled or lined vestments are mentioned by Matthew Paris. During the whole of the century the features are the same. The cyclas and other garments of the surcoat order are very common. But amongst all these dandifications for the male, the lady of the house presents us with an almost unchanged Anglo-Saxon kind of wimple, connected with a sort of veil which flows down the back, while the tunic approaches nearer to the gunna than it had done during the preceding century. Charming little caps are worn rather wider at the top than at the base, very daintily fluted and pleated. These are called *chapels* or *chapeaux*, and sometimes in their stead is worn a rich golden chaplet, placed over the wimple. The hair is frequently shown gathered into a net or caul of gold thread. The long plaited tails disappear entirely, the hair being turned up into the caul, and over this the wimple comes.

The fourteenth century affords the novelty of buttons, but the first mention of them refers to their position on the sleeve from the elbow to the wrist. We also find the cyclas, the *bliaus*—the prototype of the modern French blouse, which it resembled in form and use.

The caul of golden network, concealing or containing the hair, continues to be worn, especially by married ladies and those of the nobility. Over this the veil is thrown, and a

curious species of neckcloth called a gorget. This may be regarded as the phase of decay of the wimple, for it served one purpose of that garment in hiding the throat and chin, being fastened with pins or skewers to the mass of hair below the veil. Besides the caul, there are other modes of fixing the mass of hair in its place. The most natural of these is a system of bands, one passing over the top of the forehead and going to the back of the head, under the hair, while the other, passing under the chin, is led upwards on each side of the face, so as to cross the chaplet (under it), and is thence carried over the top of the head to the back. The hair being massed in a globular form all round the head and ears, had a peculiar but not unpleasing effect, and doubtless in many cases nature was fain to be aided by art. Over this curious hair ball the veil was thrown, and held fast by pins. Many fantastic forms were now produced by the modes adopted of fixing and wearing the gorget. Sometimes the head and neck are tightly swathed up in bandages, and these are twisted into strange shapes. Occasionally the veil is supported on a skewer passing through the hair and projecting on each side above the level of the ears at the back of the head, so that the cloth seems hung on horns. Again we meet with it screwed up, as it were, into knots, like horns at the side, and to these excrescences the gorget is pinned. So extravagant did this mode become, that some antiquaries have taken the fantastic knots, ties, and skewers to be an early form of the horned head-dress of the fifteenth century. But this is only an error in judgment. The net, or caul, was named the crestine, creton, crespine, or crespinette, and formed an elegant addition to the female costume of the period.*

* Planché, 127.

The use of long trains was decidedly objectionable, when we consider that the ladies wearing them had no carriages, that the pavement was of the most rugged and barbarous description, and the roads of the dirtiest.

The gorget is sometimes called the towel.

Although a dress laced down the middle is shown in a MS. of the eleventh century as adorning the person of his Satanic Majesty, I am aware of no direct allusion to the practice of tight-lacing in poetry before the year 1300, when, in the "Lay of Syr Launful" two damsels are described thus:

> "Their kirtles were of Inde sendel.
> Y-laced small, jolyf and well."

But this line is much stronger in the French original, which reads, "Lacies moult estreitemen",—very tightly, or rather straightly, laced. The kirtle is here evidently an exterior garment, probably the robe or gown.

The inferior classes seem to have remained quite the same as to dress that they were before the Conquest, having the addition of the blians, which is, after all, only an addition in name, for the object in question is the old smock-frock, so called from the Anglo-Saxon *smeogan*, to creep, because the wearer had to creep into it from the lower part. Cowls or hoods with tails are much worn; the blacksmith has his leathern apron with the bib, just as is worn at the present day; and in the reign of Edward the Second we find a bibbed apron forming part of the female attire.

Long leggings or stockings, richly worked with gold threads, seem to have been worn by the men; but the extravagant length of the outer garments worn by the gentry hide them from sight. The leggings of the

working classes resemble in great measure those of the Anglo-Saxons.

The rigid simplicity of taste manifested by the warrior king, Edward the Third, was to some extent copied by the nobles of his court. A military monarch is the best teacher of simplicity; and the evidence of Edward's martial skill might be seen in the rejection of the absurd and effeminate garments of his predecessor. The short garment, fitting as closely to the figure as a jersey frock, came no lower than the middle of the thigh. All the draperies and petticoats and long skirts vanished from the male wardrobe, to be succeeded by this neat vestment, called a *cote-hardie*. It was buttoned down the middle, and was frequently sumptuously ornamented. The baldrick, or knightly belt worn over it, rested on the hips, and proclaimed the rank of the wearer, while not infrequently the arms of his family were embroidered upon it. The sleeves reached only to the elbow, where they disclosed the sleeves of the under tunic or doublet, buttoned from thence to the wrist. From the half-sleeve of the *cote-hardie* hung long slips of cloth, called tapettes, or tippets, and over the *cote-hardie* was worn a large, long mantle, fastened by buttons to the right shoulder. The end of this mantle was occasionally flung across the left shoulder, in the manner of the melodramatic bandit's cloak, and the edges of the garment show the same fantastic dags or leaf-like cuttings as were worn in the time of Henry the Second.

In this reign English began to be spoken at Court. Boys at school had to translate their exercises into English, and not into French, "because French had become so little understood in the land", as I have already had occasion to

point out. And the dress, too, as if partaking of the general character of the time, threw off its Norman trammels, rejected the absurd devices for obstructing men's progress, and returned to something like the old, simple form of garment; though the *cote-hardie* is not by any means to be confounded with the rock of the Anglo-Saxon—their points of resemblance being their freedom from superfluous encumbrance, and their perfect adaptation to the end in view.

The Normans had ceased to be. The glorious language of England was relieved from the oppression of an alien form of speech. English thought was free, and the exponent of this internal freedom was very naturally a perfect freedom in dress. That the military mind, with all its love of practical simplicity *ad rem,* is not blind to the benefits to be derived from external splendour *in modo,* is a truth which no one will dispute; hence the dress of the knights of Edward the Third's time, although so simple in form, were profusely magnificent in the matter of adornment. And the result of these changes was as disastrous in one direction as it had been beneficial in another. This went so far, that sumptuary laws had to be enacted, of which I give a specimen, on the authority of Planché.

"Furs of ermine and lettice, and embellishments of pearls, excepting for a head-dress, were strictly forbidden to any but the royal family and nobles possessing upwards of one thousand pounds a year.

"Cloths of gold and silver, and habits embroidered with jewellery, lined with pure miniver and other expensive furs, were permitted only to knights and ladies whose incomes exceeded four hundred marks yearly.

"Knights whose income exceeded two hundred marks,

or squires possessing two hundred pounds in lands or tenements, were permitted to wear cloth of silver with ribands, girdles, etc., reasonably embellished with silver, and woollen cloth of the value of six marks the whole piece; but all persons under the rank of knighthood, or of less property than the last mentioned, were confined to the use of cloth not exceeding four marks the whole piece, and were prohibited wearing silks and embroidered garments of any sort, or embellishing their apparel with any kind of ornaments of gold, silk, or jewellery. Rings, buckles, ouches, girdles, and ribands were all forbidden decorations to them, and the penalty annexed to the infringement of this statute was the forfeiture of the dress or ornament so made or so worn."

One feather worn in the cap, appears in this reign; and beaver hats, probably made in Flanders, are referred to. They were often worn over the capuchon.

The female dress, although imitating that of the men, is not so illustrative of my position of the return to English thought at this period. The women wore the *cote-hardie* as the men did; it was buttoned down the middle in just the same way. There was, however, a gown with tight sleeves, sometimes reaching to the elbows and sometimes to the wrists, very closely resembling the polonaise of the present day. When the sleeves were worn to the elbow they were furnished with such tappets or long-cloth streamers as were worn by the men. Like those of the Anglo-Saxon ladies, the dresses of their descendants in Edward the Third's reign were very long; so long, indeed, as to render it necessary for the wearers to hold them up in walking. Trains were much in vogue. But the worst feature about the female dress seems to be a decided

advance in the vice of tight-lacing. Long waists even were affected and considered a beauty. Still it does not seem that actual stays were used. The approach is there, the fine end of the wedge which has wrought such dire disaster since.

But the most telling and emphatic piece of female costume of this period is a very curious garment having much the appearance of a close-fitting jacket, occasionally with sleeves to the wrist, but more often without any sleeves whatever. It descends to the hips, and the front is cut in curves almost like a man's jacket or single-breasted coat of the present day. The two edges of this garment are richly bordered with fur, and this is continued round the bottom. Occasionally no sleeves are worn, and the sides of this curious garment are cut out in exaggerated arm-holes. The gown below is then furnished with tight-fitting sleeves, and is generally of another colour than this somewhat anomalous piece of dress. But its graceful curves contribute not a little to the elegance of the whole costume, and impart a neatness to the figure which may be seen at once on inspecting the MSS. of this period. The back is straight and flat. The hair is shown very plainly parted on the brows and tucked up at the back, where it is confined by a net or caul. The kirtle is cut lower in front, and the wimple disappears. The women, like the men, wore hoods when riding out, and the curious tail or liripipes attached to the hoods they wrapped round their heads like cords.

The end of the fourteenth century saw a peace-loving king on the throne, and the same phenomena that marked the commencement of the century also marked its wane. The weak, idle fop who succeeded his grandsire was a slave

to vanity and absurdity in dress. As in the time of Edward the Second, so in that of Richard the Second, the garments of the men became absurdly long, and though the female dress remained practically what it had been, that of the sterner sex was more ridiculous than ever. A peaceful government means war all round, whereas the only assurance that can be had of peace is in a strong military government that other powers fear to attack. The peaceful idiosyncrasies of Richard the Second plunged England into civil war, which was indeed a sharp remedy, though a sure one, for the effeminacy that preceded it.

To make a garment as costly as possible seems to have been the end-all and be-all of this mighty king of England. Nor is this, perhaps, quite such an easy task as may at first sight appear. For when the resources of the mercers have been exhausted, it is not every mind that would hit on the sublime idea of having one's garments covered with precious stones, worked into mottoes and letters intertwined, after the fashion of modern monograms! Richard the Second possesses the glorious fame of having achieved this. On the authority of a portrait of his majesty, preserved in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster Abbey, Richard wore a mantle embroidered all over with roses, and the initial letter of his name worked in gems and precious stones.

I have noticed the fashion of cutting the edge of cloak and mantle into leaves or dags, or jags, and this queer custom seemed to run mad in its revival under the auspices of Richard of Bordeaux. But for the feather in a man's hat, there is nothing in his wide and long dress to prevent our taking him for an old woman. Chaucer, in the *Persones Tale*, written at the end of this reign, says:—"As to the

first synne in superfluite of clothing which that maked is so dere, to harm of the people, not oonly the cost of embrowdyng, the disguising, endentyng or barrying, ounding, palyng or bendyng, and semblable wast of cloth in vanite; and there is also costlewe furring in here gowns, so mochil pounsyng of chiseles to make holes, so much daggyng of scheris (shears), for with the superfluite in length of the forsaide gownes traylynge in the donge and in the myre, on hors and eek on foote, as well of man as of woman." Then he goes on to upbraid the men of his time with indelicacy on the side of too little clothing, so that the good parson seems hard to please. Bell's Chaucer with Skeat's preface is attainable by all the world in Bohn's edition, and there the dress of the period is described more minutely than the space of a single Lecture will allow. One thing is clear, namely, that the two extremes in dress, absurd exuberance or equally absurd exiguity, met in the short reign of Richard the Second.

The warlike neatness of Edward the Third was caricatured into an offensive mode on the one hand, while the lengthening process in the dress of the pacific Edward was ruinously extravagant on the other. Besides the odd appearance of the cape-like cloak (somewhat resembling the "Havelock" of a few years back, made extravagantly full and with jags or little leaves cut all round), there was the additional grotesquerie of making garments of two colours. The robe was divided down the middle, one side being blue and the other white (the colours of the Houses of York and Lancaster), or any other good and strikingly contrasted tints. When the short dress with the long leggings was worn, the two legs were encased in hose of

different colours. Planché says, speaking of this period, and quoting an anonymous author cited by Camden, "Some in wide surcoats reaching to their heels, close before, and strutting out on the sides, so that at the back they make men seem like women, and this they call by the ridiculous name gowne. Their hoods are little, tied under the chin and buttoned like the women's, but set with gold, silver, and precious stones. Their liripipes or tippets pass round the neck, and hanging down before, reach to the heels all jagged. They have another weed of silk, which they call a paltock; their hose are of two colours, or pied with more, which they tie to their paltocks with white lachets, called herlots. Their girdles are of gold and silver, and some of them are worth twenty marks. Their shoes and pattens are snouted and picked, more than a finger long, crooking upwards, which they call crackowes, resembling devils' claws, and fastened to the knees with chains of gold and silver."

"Paletoque" is explained to be a word of Spanish origin, compounded of *palla*, a cloak, and *toque*, a covering for the head; probably a monk's frock with the hood attached. It seems to be connected with the Spanish word *paleto*, meaning a country bumpkin. However this may be, it is certainly the parent of our paletot, which, although borrowed from the other side of the water, bids fair to become naturalised amongst the many queer expressions which have found refuge under the ægis of the English dictionary.

To this era the large, wide sleeves called "pokes" are to be referred, which being worn by domestics, were a fruitful source of discontent to the masters; for, as the

Monk of Evesham writes, they were the devil's receptacles, for whatever could be stolen was popped into them, and on account of their length were always having "the first taste of the soups and sauces" which the servants had to bring up.

The ladies followed the fashion of the men, and there is no doubt that the elegant sideless spencer, to which allusion has been made, was only a feminine version of the jupon worn by men over their armour and emblazoned with their arms. So completely was this garment adopted by the ladies, that the "almighty petticoat" is called a jupon in many parts of Europe at the present day, where the name has lost all reference to the virile dress. Many of these body pieces are evidently adaptations of the male tabard. In this reign they are found with trains.

The apron was a distinguishing feature in the female dress, especially of the lower orders; it was called the "barm-cloth" from *barm*, the bosom, which is a fine Teutonic word existing all over the North of Europe.

In reading the description of the dress of the wife of Bath, in Chaucer, we meet the wimple again; and as the passage is in many respects very instructive, it is given in full :—

> "A good Wif was there of byside Bathe,
> But sche was somdel deef and that was skathe
> Of cloth making, she had such an haunt,
> Sche passed hem of Ypris and of Gaunt.
> In all the parishe wif ne was ther noon
> That to the offryng byforn hire schulde goon,
> And if ther dide, certeyn so wroth was sche
> That sche was than out of all charité.
> Hire kevercheſs weren ful fyne of grounde,
> I durste swere they weyghede ten pounde,

That on the Sonday were upon hire heed.
Hir hosen weren of fine scarlett reed,
Ful streyte y-teyed, and schoos ful moyste and newe.
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
Sche was a worthy womman al hire lyfe,
Housbondes atte chirche dore hadde sche fyfe.

* * * *

Upon an amblere esely sche sat,
Wymplid ful wel, and on hire heed an hat
As brood as is a bocler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hire hupes large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores scharpe
In felawschipe wel cowde lawghe and carpe."

Bearing in mind the fact that the ordinary dress of those devoted to religion did not differ from the attire of ordinary suffering humanity, and the custom of decorating the dress with all kinds of dainty devices, especially with mottoes and phrases in gems, we shall understand how, speaking of the ornament worn by the prioress, we find the words—

"On which was first i written a crowned A,
And after that, *Amor vincit omnia*."

The sumptuary laws of Henry IV were perhaps more severe than those previously issued, but were perhaps even less regarded. They are chiefly directed against the wearing of gold and silver ornaments and furs by non-qualified persons. Ladies seem to have been less given to change than men at this period, for no special alteration seems to have taken place in their costume, save in the appearance of the monstrous horned head-dress, which does not attain its full development until the reign of Henry V. It was a curious construction, designed, doubtless, to carry and exhibit the veil or head cloth to greater advantage, for it is generally worn under that important adornment.

We have seen how the hair could be massed and banded into a kind of ball, to which pins or skewers could be fastened so as to hold the gorget or neckcloth. In the same way a couple of padded, horn-shaped excrescences were added to the toilette, upon which the finer veil could be spread out, and from which it could depend. In the centre, between these monstrosities, was a sort of cushion, on which, in the case of the lady being a person of high rank, the coronet in the sculptured monumental effigy is placed.

This fashion became a rage, in spite of sumptuary laws, sermons, homilies, and every kind of opposition. Later on it became modified into various forms, and we find it resembling a split turban, a mitre, a pair of wings, an indented cushion, and so forth.

The garments of the men present no striking novelties whatever. Both Henry IV and Henry V were soldiers, who cared little for the long dressing-gown atrocities of Richard II; and we find men represented with long hose, short breeches or drawers, and the *cote-hardie*. But these were very gorgeously adorned and embroidered. The wide sleeves or pokes already mentioned were added to the short jupon, and descended in all the pride of dags, and jags, and gold, and gems, almost to the ground.

The fifteenth century opens with the reign of a weak-minded king—Henry VI—and, as usual, we find the strangest jumble of costume, the wildest extravagance that can very well be conceived. Queer hats, flat caps, shoes with points of ridiculous length, make their appearance with all the grotesqueness of a scene in a modern pantomime. The *chaperon* develops into a respectable hat, to

which is added a thick roll of cloth called the roundlet, from which a tippet descends so low as to trail on the ground. "The gown, doublet, or jacket, instead of being made close and high up in the neck, as in the last century, is now cut round even with the shoulders, frequently showing the small, stand-up collar hollowed out in front, belonging to some under vestment, with tight sleeves that protrude through holes made in the loose ones of the gown or jacket, which latter hang down, richly trimmed with fur, and seemingly more for ornament than service.*

Doublets of silk, satin, and velvet were worn even by the boys; all kinds of foppery prevailed in the dresses of the men, whose jackets, pourpoints, and doublets were cut shorter than ever. The hair was worn long, sometimes in curls, sometimes parted on the forehead and descending to the shoulders, and sometimes with the "fringe" occasionally seen among ladies of the present day, although it was then confined to men.

The martial Edward the Fourth endeavoured to check these abuses, but with the usual result. Fashion is too strong even for a conqueror, and the list of stuffs and furs permitted to the various ranks in society would only be tedious to enumerate. For us the circumstances of chief interest are the use of high-crowned hats, very short jerkins, pleated or gathered in at the back so as to resemble two fans united by the handles, long hose, and long-toed boots.

Among the ladies a new monstrosity appears in the shape of the so-called steeple head-dress, referred to by some as the "butterfly" head-dress. It consisted of a coni-

* Planché, *History of British Costume*, p. 208.

cal cap of cloth, from half an ell to three-quarters in height, and from the apex of this descended the veil, for the display of which it was intended, as the horns were which preceded it. The hanging veil was sometimes taken up and worn over the arm, to prevent its trailing on the ground. The butterfly was a variety of this machine, so called on account of the two wing-like ornaments worn at the side.

This head-dress gave great offence to the clergy. A monk, Thomas Conecte by name, preached against it with such effect, that the women who heard him threw off their towers and made a bonfire of them before his eyes. But the head-dress lived on notwithstanding, and when the good monk's back was turned it grew taller than ever. As late as the close of the seventeenth century the fashion was revived in Sweden by a German lady, a certain Fräulein von Tann, whose name became Gallicised into "Fontange", and after her the article of dress was subsequently so named. The father of the celebrated theologian, Swedenborg, was Bishop of Skara, and he preached a sermon against it. I remember the book containing this sermon, and some other works of the Bishop, in my father's library, and especially the curious woodcut of the fontange. The head-dress in question is still alive, and may be seen on the head of a Normandy peasant girl, with the butterfly's wings all complete.

At the close of the fifteenth century the dress of the English was exceedingly fantastical and absurd, inasmuch as it was even difficult to distinguish one sex from another, and this complaint is again bitterly set forth by the clergy. Long gowns, long curling locks, and fantastic little caps, called *bonets*, were worn. These were directly taken from

the French, who had them from the inhabitants of Brittany, where the article in question was called by the Celtic word *banniard*. Besides the long gowns, short jackets were worn, pleated and otherwise dandified. Linen began to be bordered with lace.

In the time of Henry VII enormously large and broad-brimmed hats, with immense plumes, appear. The ladies wore their hair flowing down the back, and on the head the golden net was placed like a cap, or a quilted cap was worn, covered with the caul to fill it out.

The slashes in the hose and doublet of the time of Henry VII are prototypes of the more emphatic fashion known to you all as marking the reigns of Henry VIII, Elizabeth, and James. The long stockings, or rather hose were tied to the breeches by points, and gold chains were favourite adornments of the men. The women seem to have been less fantastic than the men, as usual. Nor do I find, with the exceptions of the horned head-dress and the steeple, that up to the present point of history we have anything to charge them with. The crying sin of stays was not committed until the time of Elizabeth, when whale-bone and busks were first used, the laced dresses hinted at in the twelfth and fourteenth centuries not amounting to what we call stays.

The dress of the English from the time of Henry VIII down to the present day is well known to you all. Excellent engravings, pictures, and pieces of sculpture, exist in profusion, so that any allusion to them would be out of place in a lecture confined to the treasures of the British Museum for its illustration. I may be allowed to add, in conclusion, that the expression Anglo-Norman, as applied to any article

or style of dress, is a misnomer. The dress used by the Normans was what may be called early English, which, with the wimple of the ladies, may be said to mark the period from the sixth to the thirteenth centuries: the occasional lengthening or shortening of robes being a matter of little real consequence.

The excess in luxurious dresses is certainly due to Norman influence, and against this, woman, to her honour be it said, held out more than man. So that the early English period includes Saxon and Norman dress as one thing with very slight modification.

Then we come to the periods of long hose and short jerkins, varied occasionally by ridiculous affectation of the female attire by the man, and with the ladies the horned and steeple head-dresses, and the close-fitting sleeveless tabard. All this ground, down to the Reformation, may be called middle English as to dress.

The period inaugurated by Elizabeth may be called, for ladies' dress, emphatically the stay period. For men, the modern English time.

These three grand divisions will help the antiquary and the artist more than any attempted refinement as to what was Saxon and what was Norman in a people who were neither one nor the other, but English.

Lecture VI.

SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

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SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

ANY subject, however trivial in itself, acquires some amount of interest when treated historically, and any historical subject may be made to tell the tale of the past if only looked at through a medium lending to it the required colouring. Even the sports and pastimes of a nation may be taken as exponents of a national character, and very often they throw a light on history which the dry old chronicles of the monks, written under the cloud of a foreign idiom, fail signally to show.

The manuscripts in the British Museum are very rich in illustrations of our sports, although some of them would be the last from which we should expect sports and pastimes to be illustrated,—the Psalters, for example, would not strike us as being the books in which to find the subject of this Lecture illustrated,—yet the so-called "Queen Mary's Psalter" is one of the richest sources of our information on this head.

The accurate student of the past who desires special instruction in this direction will find many hints and an immense amount of curious information in Strutt's exhaustive *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England;* but my object in the present Lecture is rather to show how the national character has found, so to speak, an exponent in its sports, than to give a history of them.

We have nothing to do with Rome or the Romans. Their sports and pastimes live in other lands, in bull-fights, corsos, and other displays of Roman taste. But there is a Roman who has something to do with us, and that is Tacitus, who, in writing about the Germans, includes the Scandinavian English. Of the Germans, he says that they are passionately fond of gambling, and will play away all their spoils in war, and often lose their arms and armour in a game of dice; when all is gone, they will stake their personal freedom on the throw. And then the Roman has a wonderful sneer at "Northern honour", for he observes that when everything else has gone in this way, and nothing left but their persons to play for, and they have set their liberties and persons on the last throw, "the loser goes into voluntary servitude; and, though the youngest and strongest, patiently suffers himself to be bound and sold. Such is their obstinacy in a bad practice—they themselves call it honour. The slaves thus acquired are exchanged away in commerce, that the winner may get rid of the scandal of his victory."*

The idea of a debt of honour going before all other obligations is thus deeply implanted in the Teutonic blood, and lives with us at the present day as strongly as in the days of Tacitus, for we were among those very Germans of whom he speaks.

The only public amusement practised by the Germans to which the learned Roman alludes is the sword-dance, performed by young warriors before assembled crowds, for no fee or reward beyond the applause of the spectators.

* Tacitus *Germ.*, c. 24.

These two features noticed by Tacitus are and have been the main types of our sports and pastimes ever since, affording the headings to two great branches of the subject,—athletic sports, represented by the sword-dance, and games of chance or skill, represented by the dicing; from these two ideas, in fact, all our sports in their various modifications have, more or less, descended.

When we came to Britain we brought war with us, to ensure our peaceful possession of the island in the time to come; and as that invasion took place some five hundred years after the time of Tacitus, we may well be prepared to find our sports and pastimes, though greatly enlarged upon and augmented, still included under these two simple headings.

We have these two headings, as I have called them, to our national sports and pastimes from the Roman point of view. Let us glance for a moment at our own resources and authorities, and see what is to be found in the ancient books of our own race on this interesting subject.

The *Edda* tells us that the gods, when Baldur had been rendered invulnerable by the promise of all nature, animate or inanimate, not to harm the favourite of Valhalla, instituted a game which consisted in throwing their spears, javelins, and arrows at the "white god", as Baldur was called, partly from the spotless purity of his life, and partly from his being emphatically the sun-god, the deity whose brow supplied all mankind with light and lustre. This beaming deity was placed with his back against the holy-tree (now called, corruptly, the holly), and the rest of the Æsir, or royal race of the gods, shot at him, the missiles either passing through him

without doing any damage, or falling harmlessly down from his beloved form, leaving it quite unscathed.

Now there was, amongst the twelve gods of Valhalla, one who was a traitor. This was the Utgárd Loki, the enemy of Goodness and Truth, and he knew that when Nanna, the bride of Baldur, had obtained this universal promise, the mistletoe had been overlooked, because he himself had sat upon the branch of the oak on which it grew, in the shape of a white crow (afterwards black for punishment), and hid the parasite from view. So he contrived to get an arrow made of the wood of the mistletoe put into the hand of Höder, the blind brother of the sun-god. Standing behind him, Loki directs the shaft, which flies on to the breast of the beaming one.

The cock, since then sacred to Baldur, flies up to intercept the arrow, which first pierces his breast, and finally sinks into the heart of Baldur.

The death of Baldur and his subsequent re-admission to Valhalla for half the year, while during the other half he remains with the pale goddess of the lower regions; the opening of the rosy portals by Eostra, goddess of the Dawn, to receive him; as well as the other circumstances of this beautiful myth, have been dwelt upon in another place,* and I only refer to it now to show you where to look for the origin of the early English or Anglo-Saxon archery games, their casting the bar and javelin at a figure armed as a warrior, and the custom of shooting at the cock at Easter.

The attack on the armed warrior was afterwards considered a variety of the quintain, though in all probability

* *Older England*, First Series, p. 73 *et seq.*

the quintain was itself derived from an older game, foreshadowed by the attack of the gods on Baldur; and many other customs of far later times are due to the teachings of this charming piece of mythology.

To shoot at an armed warrior, protected only by his shield, is here seen to be a game instituted by the gods themselves, so that we need not be surprised at finding it among the observances of those who claimed descent from them. The word "quentain", or "quemtain", has a very suspicious look about it, and I suspect it was derived from some such expression as *kaœn tan*, keen-tooth—a capital name for a warrior. However, I must observe that this is mere hypothesis.

The English branch of the Scandinavian tree allowed the practice of archery to fall into abeyance until, after the sharp lesson at Hastings, they began to pay greater attention than ever to the bow, and we find all sorts of precautions taken to make Englishmen good bowmen. Yew trees were grown in churchyards; laws were passed enforcing the use of the weapon; and the archery games thus instituted became national. In Finsbury there were butts set up for practice with the bow and arrow: these were mounds of earth artificially thrown up, having targets fixed upon them whereat the archers shot. The existence of this practice is preserved in the name of Newington Butts; while the ground belonging to the Artillery Company, near Finsbury Square, was originally devoted to the archers of the City of London, formerly celebrated as marksmen. The bow has yielded to the rifle, but the ground is still devoted to the same purpose in the new phase. Nobler sport cannot be desired than that which

the marksman enjoys; while the true eye, elastic tread, and shoulder-to-shoulder feeling engendered by the game have done much to render the English riflemen of Tel-el-Kebir worthy descendants of the archers of Cressy and Poictiers.

The early English in their pagan state were accustomed to a kind of sword-dance round the altar of Odin, which continued for a whole week previous to one of the great festivals in his honour. This was called the *ymbirrnen*, or *ymbirren*, the round running; and this is preserved in our Christian cultc under the name of the *Ember* week, which name has nothing whatever to do with embers, being only a corruption of *ymb irrnen*. Military games at the time when the days begin to lengthen (hence Lent, from *lencten*) were the forerunners of the volunteer manœuvres of the Victorian age; and it is a good sign when so large a proportion of the population of the island shows that notwithstanding the disadvantages of these times, the old martial spirit has not been quite stamped out among us.

There is hardly an English man, or woman either, who has never heard of Robin Hood and his merry archers in Sherwood Forest, but there may be many to whom the equally exciting and equally English adventures of Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley are unknown. And yet there is much in the spirited old histories of these worthies, preserved by Bishop Percy, in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, that would delight the youth and maidens of the present day, as much as they did their ancestors.

The grand military dance performed by the Saxon youth in the time of Tacitus would prepare us to expect military

amusements as the chief relaxation of their immediate successors, and accordingly we find the word "play"—a pure, ancient Teutonic word—applied to all sorts of war-like exercises. Thus we have such expressions as *plega gáres*, play of the javelins; *æse-plega*, play of spears; *linden plega*, play of the shields; *sweardu plega*, sword play; *hand plega*, the play of hands, and many others of a similar kind, all English; ancient in form, but quite intelligible to modern students without translation. When the Anglo-Saxon (as I am compelled to call the early Englishman) had to translate Latin themes for school, we find the Roman gladiator called *plegere*, a player; or *plege man*, a play man; while the theatre and amphitheatre are called a *plega hûs* and *plega stow*, a play house or place, respectively. A picture in the Harleian MS. No. 603 exhibits a *plega stow* according to early English ideas. A number of spectators are gathered together to witness the performances of a trained bear. The animal is lying down, pretending to be dead. A minstrel, or *glee-man*, a man who produces mirth or glee, is playing upon a kind of double pipe, the recorders of later times, and a dancer is performing to the music. One of the audience is clapping his hands in delight, while others are engaged in earnest conversation upon the merits of the performance.

Each village had its green or play-ground, and outside each town similar spaces were reserved for play and *gamen*, *i.e.*, amusement, pleasure, or delight. There was, as is still found in the north of Germany, Scandinavia, and Russia, to this day—as in the old time before we were Christians—a running brook and a well near to the village green or play-ground. Bearing in mind that the games

were instituted in honour of one of the gods of the Odinic series, we shall at once be led to connect this custom with the *well-wortha*, or well-worship, so firmly adhered to by our forefathers and foremothers, that, long after Alfred's time, nay, after the Norman usurpation, laws were enacted against it. "To wake the well" was to appeal to the divinity invoked through the inferior spirit of the well, who was supposed to be more come-at-able than the deity himself. These religious festivals were the origin of our village *wakes*. The gleeman, the hoppestere, or dancing girl, the bear-leader, were welcome at such gatherings; and in them we see the origin of our fairs, with their subsequent declensions into mere resorts of riotous amusement.

That these half-religious, half-warlike, and wholly Teutonic gatherings should have attracted the wandering merchants of those times is very natural, and the process is very clearly put in one of the MSS. of the Harleian collection (No. 3601, fol. 12, v), which speaks of the celebrated fair at Barnwell, near Cambridge. "It was a large open place between the town and the banks of the river, well suited for such festivities as those of which we are speaking. A spring in the middle of this plain, we are told in the early chartulary of Barnwell Abbey, was called Beornawyl (the well of the youths), because every year on the eve of the nativity of St. John the Baptist the boys and youths of the neighbourhood assembled there, and, after the manner of the English, practised wrestling and other boyish games, and mutually applauded one another with songs and musical instruments; whence, on account of the multitude of boys and girls who

gathered there, it grew a custom for a crowd of sellers and buyers to assemble there on the same day for the purpose of commerce."*

The day of the nativity of St. John was, in our pre-Christian period, the anniversary of Baldur's descent to the lower regions. The sun-god mounts his funeral-pyre, which on that occasion blazes through the night; in other words, the sun does not set on that night, but remains through midnight glowing in the blue vault, which is the floor of Valhalla. The funeral-pyre is called Baldur's Bâl (or Bål) in the North; and in England we called the fires lighted on St. John's eve Bale fires, long after the myth had died. Who would have thought of connecting John the Baptist with Baldur? Nobody ever did so; but, like other pagan feasts and solemn occasions, it was not swept away by the innovating hand of the Christian priest; like Christmas, it was *christened*, and not destroyed. The good fathers cared little about the minor details if they only got their proselytes to believe in St. John and forget Baldur, to adore Christ and forget Odin. The Bale fire has as little to do with St. John as the holly, mistletoe, ivy, and plum-pudding have to with our Blessed Lord. But they remain, and prove that the old priests were right: they do not now remind us of Baldur and of Odin, but of a much higher order of teaching.

Of course the early English could not bring the sun with them (however much we may regret their inability to do so); consequently artificial fires had to take the place of "the sky's ship" on the anniversary of Baldur's

* Wright's *History of the Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages*, p. 67. London, 1862.

fate. Hence the "Bale fires", as they used to be called, or St. John's fires, as they were termed until very recently in Cornwall.

These festivals, with their dances and games, are all Teutonic. We find nothing Roman amongst them save the names bestowed on them by the Christian fathers in converting them, so to say, to Christianity; but there is one sport, or rather a collection of sports, which remains as pagan as ever, and has become more barbarous than in the pagan times of old. I mean hunting.

To the early immigrants from Scandinavia the hunt was the only means of obtaining certain kinds of food. The wild boar, the still more terrible orochs, the elk, the bear, were all hunted for food; and as the pursuit of these animals was always attended with considerable personal risk, it would naturally be popular with such danger-loving adventurers as our remote ancestors were. Next to war, the chase was the occupation nearest their hearts, and the most natural to indulge in, as being "mimicry of glorious war". Besides, there was a very warlike side to hunting, for the bear was not always attacked only to obtain hams. He was as often slain in self-defence; while the wolf and the fox were only followed for the sake of destroying dangerous foes, without any ultimate thought connected with the larder.

In both these phases hunting was a noble and laudable occupation; the only slur that a poet could cast upon it being its necessity, a slur which to most minds would be the highest praise. But when the condition of society has changed so much, that to indulge a passion for the chase a party of men send over to France to buy a fox, that they

may run the poor wretch down and torture him for fun, the noble side of our civilised notions of Christian hunting does not seem brilliant.

When our forests swarmed with dangerous wild boars, when wolves devoured our children, and foxes were everywhere, to disappoint our dearest Michaelmas expectations, then hunting was, indeed, a necessary and laudable occupation.

So when we find our ancestors getting up very early, armed with boar-spear and seax, subsequently with the hunting-knife, riding out to meet formidable game, and "bagging" bears, elks, wolves, and foxes for fun, or boars and wild oxen for food, we feel that it was a right noble thing to do; and the same feeling descending from those noble sires—(who also hunted the Picts and Scots and Britons away from their broad fields)—now sends our youngsters off to India to shoot "Stripes" in the jungle (as they call hunting the tiger), and to oppose Teuton steel to the bear's claws farther north! Yes, those are sports and pastimes indeed that those brave sires would appreciate, and we may almost fancy we hear the ring of their battle blades beaten against their bucklers, sending a hearty burst of applause to us from the tomb!

The bow and arrows seem, with the boar-spear, to have constituted the chief weapons used in the chase from the earliest times until long after the employment of gunpowder; but there is one curious and most interesting mode of pursuing birds which has long been lost to us, and that is the noble art of falconry. That gentle bird, the falcon, is only known to the naturalist as one of the *Raptores:* that is all. There is nothing left us of the poetry of the

bells, the hood, the lure, and all the pretty things that surround him as with a halo of mediæval romance. The falcon, or falk, is dead to us, despite the assurance of the naturalist, and we shall never more see the English nobleman or woman ride out with the brave bird on his or her wrist. From the earliest MSS., from the Bayeux Tapestry itself, down to the more recent days of Good Queen Bess, we have been taught to connect the falcon with gentle blood. Who does not know the charming poem by Skelton, in which he apostrophises Dame Margaret as

> "Of ladies the flower,
> Gentle as falcon,
> Or hawk of the tower"?

"Stephen, King of England, is represented as bearing the hawk on his hand as a proof of being of noble, if not of royal blood; and in Germany, Sebastian Brandt, in his *Narrenschiff*, or *Ship of Fools*, published towards the end of the fifteenth century, accuses his countrymen of the disgraceful custom of carrying their hawks to church with them. Ladies not only accompanied the sterner sex in pursuit of this pleasure, but they very often practised it alone. A writer of the thirteenth century endeavoured to bring discredit on the practice because ladies often excel gentlemen in it, proving the pastime to be effeminate and frivolous." I take this from Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, but purposely refrain from mentioning the author's name, leaving him to the oblivion which his want of gallantry merits.

Hawking was prohibited to the clergy, but, like many other prohibitions, this does not seem to have been of any use, for the higher dignitaries in the Church carried their

falcons as bravely as the lay nobility. On this account they were severely lashed by the poets and moralists, who inveighed against them bitterly for hawking and hunting too—one practice seems generally connected with the other.

The perfection of the musket caused the decline of hawking; for the method of bringing down a bird with a shot from a fowling-piece is so much more sure and certain than that of sending another bird after him, whose expensive keep and numerous wants rendered game a very costly luxury. Hentzner, in his *Itinerary*, written in 1598, assures us that "hawking was the general sport of the English nobility; at the same time, most of the best treatises upon this subject were written. At the commencement of the seventeenth century, it seems to have been in the zenith of its glory. At the close of the same century the sport was rarely practised, and a few years afterwards hardly known."*

"When the hawk was not flying at her game, she was usually hood-winked, with a cap or hood provided for that purpose and fitted to her head; and this hood was worn abroad as well as at home. All hawks taken upon 'the fist' (the term used for carrying them upon the hand) had straps of leather, called 'jessies', put about their legs. The jessies were made sufficiently long for the knots to appear between the middle and the little fingers of the hand that held them, so that the lunes, or small thongs of leather, might be fastened to them with two tyrrits, or rings; and the lunes were loosely wound round the little finger. It appears that sometimes the jessies were of silk. Lastly,

* Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, Book I, chap. ii.

their legs were adorned with bells, fastened with rings of leather, each leg having one; and the leathers to which the bells were attached were denominated 'bewits'; and to the bewit was added the creance, or long thread by which the bird, in tutoring, was drawn back, after she had been permitted to fly, and this was called the reclaiming of the hawk."

"Under the Norman government no persons but such as were of the highest rank were permitted to keep hawks, as appears from a clause inserted in the Forest Charter; this charter King John was compelled to sign; and by it the privilege was given to every free man to have aeries of hawks, sparrow-hawks, falcons, eagles, and herons in his own woods. In the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Edward III, a statute was made by which a person finding a falcon, tercelet, laner, laneret, or any other species of hawk, that had been lost by its owner, was commanded to carry the same to the sheriff of the county wherein it was found; the duty of the sheriff was to cause a proclamation to be made in all the principal towns of the county, that he had such a hawk in his custody, and that the nobleman to whom it belonged, or his falconer, might ascertain the same to be his property and have it restored to him, he first paying the costs that had been incurred by the sheriff; and if in the space of four months no claimant appeared, it became the property of the finder, if he was a person of rank, upon his paying the costs to the sheriff; on the contrary, if he was an unqualified man, the hawk belonged to the sheriff: but the person who found it was to be rewarded for his trouble."*

* Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, Book I, chap. ii.

The laws against injuring these valuable birds or destroying their eggs were, down to the time of Henry the Seventh, most severe,—a year's imprisonment being considered as a fair set-off against these offences. The value of the bird is dwelt upon by Strutt as something very extraordinary. "At the commencement of the seventeenth century, we find (he says) that a gos-hawk and a tassel-hawk were sold for one hundred marks, which was a large sum in those days, and the price is by no means mentioned as singular or extravagant; for, on the contrary, an author, Edmund Best, who published a treatise upon hawks and hawking, printed at London in 1619, and who himself trained and sold them, insinuates that the parting from the birds was considered as a favour: and no doubt it was so, if the hawks in training required such incredible pains and watchfulness, both by day and night, as he declares are absolutely necessary. And upon this account such as were properly trained and exercised were esteemed presents worthy the acceptance of a king, or an emperor. In the eighth year of the reign of Edward III, the King of Scotland sent him a falcon-gentle as a present, which he not only most graciously received, but rewarded the falconer who brought it with the donation of forty shillings,—a proof how highly the bird was valued. It is further said, that, in the reign of James I, Sir Thomas Monson gave one thousand pounds for a cast of hawks. 'A cast of hawks of[toure,' says an old book on hawking, ' signifies two, and a lese three.' "

The books of hawking assign to the different ranks of persons the sort of hawks proper to be used by them, and they are placed in the following order:—

"The eagle, the vulture, and the merloun, for an emperor; the ger-faulcon and the tercel of the ger-faulcon, for a king; the faulcon gentle and the tercel gentle, for a prince; the faulcon of the rock, for a duke; the faulcon peregrine, for an earl; the bastard, for a baron; the sacre and the sacret, for a knight; the lanere and the laneret, for an esquire; the marlyon, for a lady; the hobby, for a young man. These ben hawkes of toure, and ben both illured and reclaymed. The gos-hawk, for a yeoman; the tercel, for a poor man; the sparrow-hawk for a priest; the musket, for a holy water clerk; the kestrel, for a knave or servant."

The tercel, or tiercel, is the male of the hawk. The hawk was kept in the mew during the time of moulting, whence at Charing Cross we have the Mews, where the king's hawks were kept as early as the time of Richard II; but in 1537 this place was converted into stables for the horses of Henry VIII, and since that time this hawking term has changed its meaning to stables.

Horse-racing, amongst our earliest ancestors, was confined entirely, or almost entirely, to persons of high rank. It was necessary for them to understand the points of a horse, and their racing was generally to find out the qualities of the animal, rather than to win stakes. It was also practised for mere amusement.

Fitz Stephen, who lived in the reign of Henry II, tells us that horses were usually exposed for sale in West Smithfield; and in order to test the excellence of the most valuable hackneys and charging steeds, they were matched against each other. His words are to this effect: "When a race is to be run by this sort of horses, and perhaps by others, which also in their kind are strong and fleet, a shout

is immediately raised, and the common horses are ordered to withdraw out of the way. Three jockeys, or sometimes only two, as the match is made, prepare themselves for the contest; such as, being used to ride, know how to manage their horses with judgment: the grand point is to prevent a competitor from getting before them. The horses on their part are not without emulation; they tremble and are impatient, and are constantly in motion. At last, the signal once given, they strike, devour the course, hurrying along with unremitting velocity. The jockeys, inspired with the thoughts of applause and the hopes of victory, clap spurs to their willing horses, brandish their whips, and cheer them with their cries."

The Easter and Whitsuntide holidays were the principal times when the nobility indulged themselves in running their horses, and there is plenty of evidence to show that the so-called running horses of Edward the Third and other of our sovereigns were extremely valuable; but there is no ground for supposing that anything like betting on the turf was practised until what may be called comparatively modern times. Horse-racing was advantageously contrasted with card-playing, dicing, and stage-plays by an old puritanical writer of Elizabeth's time. But towards the end of the seventeenth century there are indications of the evil practice of betting. Burton says: "Horse-races are desports of great men, and good in themselves, though many gentlemen by such means gallop quite out of their fortunes." We may consider, therefore, the vicious part of horse-racing to be about two centuries old, while the healthful emulation between accomplished riders is ancient.

A Chester antiquary says that it had been customary, time out of mind, for the Company of the Sadlers to present to the Drapers a wooden ball, embellished with flowers, on Shrove Tuesday. In the thirty-first year of the reign of Henry VIII this was exchanged for a *bell of silver*, of the value of three shillings and sixpence or more —"to be given to him who shall run the best and the farthest on horseback, before them upon the same day." Herein we trace the origin of the saying, "to bear away the bell."

"In the reign of James I public races were established in many parts of the kingdom, and the prize was a silver bell.

"At the latter end of the reign of Charles I races were held in Hyde Park and at New Market. After the Restoration, horse-racing was revived by Charles II, who frequently honoured the pastime with his presence, and for his own amusement, when he resided at Windsor, appointed races to be made in Datchet-mead. At New Market, where it is said he entered horses and ran them in his name, he established a house for his better accommodation.

"At this time the bells seem to have been converted into cups or bowls, or some other pieces of plate, which were usually valued at one hundred guineas each; and upon these trophies of victory the pedigrees of the successful horses were engraved. William III was a patroniser of this pastime. George I, instead of a piece of plate, gave a hundred guineas, to be paid in money."*

Of the athletic sports of the Middle Ages the most gorgeous, the most popular, and the best known to us are

* Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes*, Book I, chap. iii.

the jousts and tournaments, established for the purpose of giving military men opportunities of exercising their skill in arms and improving it by practice. The tournament was a military game, in which many "players" took part; while the jousts were arranged for two, in a sort of friendly duel. Tournaments have been so often described, and are so familiar to all readers of history, that any lengthy account of them here would be out of place. The weapons, chiefly lances specially made for these encounters, were made without the barbed, or spear-head; sometimes, however, they were provided with what is called the "coronal", which consisted of three points of iron, not sharp, but each provided with a sort of button or rebate, to prevent its doing any serious damage. But the general practice was to have no head at all to the tilting-lance, the object being on the one side to push the adversary out of the saddle, and on the other to sit firmly and to cause the lance to shiver to pieces in the shock. Hence the lances were not so deadly as those used in war, and the armour was much stronger.

In the far-back pagan times, when appeal was constantly made to the trial by battle, there was a not unnatural belief that the gods of Valhalla actually presided over trials of the kind. To insure their presence sacrifices were made, and to keep off the influence of evil spirits an island was resorted to, on account of the idea that running water, or indeed water of any kind, would dissolve spells and prevent the entrance of black elves or witches. When an island was not to be had, the same effect was produced by surrounding a portion of ground with white cords stretched between hazel-wands, and these were called, in High-

German, *schranken*, or enclosed places. A *schrank* means now a box. In the poem of *Syr Trystrem* the expression "a Tournament they chest", twice repeated, bearing the sense (from the context) of enclosing, not choosing, first led me to recognise in our Chester the same idea of something enclosed, and hence applied to walled towns without reference whatever to the Latin *castrum*. These temporary enclosures were, however, called "the lists" in England. The brutal boxing-match of the so-called "fancy", with its "ring" for the lists, is the degraded, degenerated, and disgraceful progeny of the brilliant joust, at which the very flower of beauty and female delicacy did not (in the good old days gone by) disdain to preside.

But military display was not the only end and design of the sports of our forefathers. There were many games instituted, with the view of rendering the frame robust, which were in themselves unconnected with serious danger. There was throwing the bar, slinging stones of different weight with extreme precision to great distances; and farther back we meet with the practice of rolling immense blocks of granite, resorted to by the Scandinavian youth of the third and fourth centuries. Nicety of judgment was cultivated in the custom of throwing quoits and running at the ring, while swimming, foot-racing, climbing, and similar exercises tended to impart vigour and freshness to the body and confidence to the mind.

Of the games thus arising few have exercised such influence over the mind of English people, at least, as those with balls. The ball seems to have had a special fascination for us. The word is ancient and Scandinavian in its character. We find it in two forms, *böllr*, or *ballar*,

meaning a globe. It does not appear in German save as a borrowed expression of comparatively recent date. Nor have I met with it in any of the early English vocabularies in the sense of a modern ball, for playing at certain games. The earliest notice which I find of the word approximately thus spelled is in the *Brut* of Layamon where one MS. reads thus:

"Þ cleoped he Vthær
Vther com swiðe
and alle þine enihtes mid þe
and winneð þas stanes alle.
ne scullen ze læven nænne
for nu ze mazen heom habben
swulche veðerne balles."

The other MS. reads as follows:

"Þo cleopede he Vther
Vther com to me
and all þine enihtes mid þe
and nimeþ þeos stones alle
ne solle ze bi-leave nanne
for non ze mawe heom hebbe
ase feþerbeddes."

There the sense is rather *bales* than balls, as is evident from the context; but as it is the earliest use of anything like this expression that I have found, I give it. The word which we pronounce bale, as bale of cotton or cloth, is the same which in Germany appears as ball; and comparing the heavy masses of granite to bales of feathers would be apt enough, especially as the latter text has beds of feathers.

The earliest mention of ball-play in England that I have been able to meet with is by Fitz Stephen, who wrote in the thirteenth century, and he says that "annually upon

Shrove Tuesday the London school-boys go into the fields immediately after dinner and play at the celebrated game of ball: every party of boys carrying their own ball." Stowe, because goff was played in his time, thinks that the game here meant must have been goff; and as Strutt says, "without the least sanction from the Latin, he (Stowe) has added the word bastion, meaning a bat cudgel." I quite agree with Strutt's view, namely, that the game played was "hand-ball", as there is no authority to show that a bat was used, or that the ball was driven by the foot. Certainly hand-ball preceded games with sticks and bats, and was much practised on the Continent. The first authority for games with a bat, or stick, and balls, refers us to the thirteenth century, of which date there is an illumination in the Royal Library representing a man in a hood holding a large ball in his left hand and a bat in his right. Another individual is anxiously on the look-out, either having just thrown the ball, which has been caught by the batsman, or waiting until it shall be despatched in his direction by a blow from the bat. The scene is of the early part of the reign of Henry III. Strutt gives a group from a MS. in the Bodleian, in which a man is represented with a bat, and a woman is about to deliver the ball to him.

My friend Mr. Compton read a paper on the antiquity of goff or bandy ball before the Congress of the British Archæological Association, at Great Malvern, in August 1881, in which he suggests that the curved bat used in golf was very probably the origin of the term *bandy*, as applied to the game. Golf, with the dropping of the *l* before *f*, becomes goff, and the older word explains its origin as

purely Teutonic. We have it in the German *kolbe*, the butt-end of a musket, and it is doubtless the same word as *keule*, a club.

I have been able to trace the word up into the oldest form of Scandinavian speech, Icelandic, and there we find *kolfr* used for a javelin or arrow, and subsequently for the clapper of a bell, and cognate with the expression *kylfo*, a club, or the butt-end of a weapon. In Danish we get *kolv*, for an arrow or the bolt of a cross-bow. The later ideas are all connected with a rounded end or butt-end of some weapon, and this is remarkably applicable to the bandy used in golf. The term is ancient, is sturdily Teutonic, without the faintest taint of Rome to sully its pure English (Scandinavian) nature, and accordingly we find golf, or what was very like it, the most ancient game of all those played with ball, excepting hand-ball, which seems to have preceded it.

Balloon balls of leather filled with air were known in the fourteenth century, and must have been rather good fun, to judge from the illuminations.

Trap, bat, and ball is another ancient game, or at least comparatively so. A manuscript formerly in the possession of Mr. Douce, and undoubtedly of the fourteenth century, represents this game with a very queer trap certainly, but the principle is the same as in that of our day.

Cricket is quite a modern invention, dating no further back than the last century, but it has become a greater favourite than any game, excepting the tournament, ever invented, although it remains understood and practised by English people only (including, of course, the English in America, Australia, and everywhere). Foreigners, even

including the kindred Germans and Scandinavians, are at a loss to understand the enthusiasm which Englishmen manifest regarding this, to them, childish way of spending time. Doubtless, the custom of playing games with bats and balls is new among adults, or at least comparatively so, and the representations in the MSS. may be generally taken to be those of children rather than of men at play. To this cause I am inclined to attribute the silence of the chronicles on the subject of such games, while military sports, and even dicing and horse-racing, are constantly referred to. There is no word precisely equivalent to our "ball" in the older English or Anglo-Saxon, and the Icelandic *böllr*, to which I have referred, means rather a globe, as a technical word in physics, than in sport.

We have seen the term *play* applied rather to the military exercises of the early English than to their mere amusements, but the expression games (*gamen*), and glee (*gliew*, *gliog*), also living words among us to-day, have different significations from that of play, and point more to amusements than to the stern necessities of life. The gleeman was the harper, the glee-wood or glee-beom, the harp, while the female vocalists and dancers who accompanied the gleeman on his rounds, were called the glee-maidens. The word has come down to us without its compounds as an equivalent for mirth; while "game" is as living a word as ever it was, denoting quieter and more mental enjoyment than either "play" or "sport". The gleeman enlivened the hall during meals, and in the time of winter he was indispensable. But the gleeman at first was not merely a minstrel, as he afterwards came to be called, who delighted the family of his patron with his skill as a harper, but he also performed

feats of dexterity as a juggler, who is erroneously believed to have been a Norman invention. The term gleeman covered all the ground which was covered by minstrel and *jongleur* of later times, just as the term minstrel originally did. The minstrel Taillefer is said to have chanted the "Song of Roland" at the commencement of the battle of Hastings, and at the same time to have flung his lance up into the air, catching it again with such dexterity, and so repeatedly, that both sides thought it must have been the work of magic. He tossed his sword also into the air in the same kind of way, and was regarded with awe by the English as a sorcerer.

The earlier Norman word, however, seems originally to have had the same fulness of meaning as gleeman, *jongleur* being a more modern refinement or sub-division of the chief thought: for, as the duties of the minstrel became more varied, they were confided to different individuals bearing different titles, as *rimours, chanteurs, conteurs, jongleours,* or *jongleurs, jestours,* and *troubadours* or *trouvères.* These names are specific appellations of individual branches of the grand profession of which minstrel was the generic title. Of these, the *trouvères* and *conteours* themselves composed the songs which they sang, while the *jongleurs* and the *chanteurs* used the compositions of others. An old French author says that the *trouvères* embellished their productions with rhyme, while the *conteurs* related their histories in prose; the *jugelours,* who in the Middle Ages were famous for playing on the *vielle* (our viol), accompanied the songs of the *trouvères.* The *vielle* was a stringed instrument sounded by the turning of a wheel, resembling, in fact, the modern hurdy-gurdy.

In the British Museum there is a MS. in which King David is represented playing the Anglo-Saxon harp, while four figures are grouped about him so as to frame the picture of the king, as it were. These four persons are named as those selected by the monarch to make psalms—Asaph, Æman, Æthan, and Idithun. Of these, Idithun is playing upon an instrument almost identical with our modern violin, while Æthan is tossing up three Anglo-Saxon knives and three balls, at the same time, showing how the gleeman or minstrel performed his part; and further, which is of greater interest to us, as it shows that the somewhat silly trick of tossing balls and knives, now confined to itinerant practitioners in the London streets, was then not considered unworthy the attention of such exalted poets as those who could aid the Royal Psalmist in the most sublime poetry ever yet breathed in mortal language. This MS. shows us what one part of the gleeman's duty was, and how the Norman appellation of *jongleours* has become debased in our day, together with the art they practised, the professors becoming jugglers and their art juggling, a term also used to denote any mean, underhand trickery.

The *conteurs* seem to have been called by various names, as *seggers*, or *sayers*, *dissours*, *jestours*, and, in the barbarous Latin of the time, also *fabulatores*. All these terms seem to have vanished, save *jestour*, from the neo-Latinism of *gestes*, in which the *g*, softening into *j*, has produced our jester. The descent from the somewhat important function of an official whose duty was to instruct and amuse by tales of the deeds of heroes of ancient days, to that of the crack-brained fool whose highest

ambition is to raise a laugh, was sudden but natural; for, being summoned to amuse his patrons on occasions of conviviality and festivity, this official found it pay better to raise a laugh than to awaken serious thoughts. To turn everything said by others into a "jest" (in the modern sense of the word) is an occupation eminently adapted to persons of mean understanding, and the relaters of the grave *gestes* of old became the frivolous jester of the later ages, called also the court fool. The parti-coloured dress, the motley of Shakespeare, was not originally a token of servitude and a label of half-wittedness. In earlier times we find important functionaries—as the sheriff—dressed in parti-coloured garments as an honourable distinction; and because the man who told instructive stories held an important position in a household, it was natural that he should be distinguished above the rest. When he descended to the low level of a maker of jokes, he still retained his parti-coloured dress; but as others had discontinued it, the distinction became one of folly rather than of wisdom.

Still the jesters always remained familiar persons, and we can see by the glimpses we get at them through Shakespeare, how important they were in being able to give *ex officio* opinions on matters which less privileged persons dared not approach. Our own word "fool" simply means a stupid, ignorant person, whose actions and words are not under the control of sound reason, but it has not the fearful meaning of the *racca* of the Hebrews, and yet it is used in very nearly the same sense in our translation of the Bible. In a Psalter in the British Museum, formerly the property of Henry VIII, there is a portrait of that king playing on a harp to his jester, Will Somers, who is looking uneasy as

the strains meet his ear. He is struck with remorse and shame. This wonderful picture illustrates the passage, "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." Here we see that fool had acquired the less grave signification, allowing of its application to the jester without losing the more terrible sense which is, in this instance, employed almost punningly.

An inferior class of jesters was called the "japers", whose office was still meaner and more productive of harm. They produced mirth by performing all kinds of antics and saying all kinds of things, setting decorum entirely at defiance. Some of these were so well rewarded that all kinds of people assumed to be minstrels of this order, in the hope of excessive pay. This increased so much that, in the reign of Edward II, laws were enacted providing that no person not duly qualified should pass himself off as a minstrel, and prohibiting a professed minstrel from going to the house of a person below the dignity of a baron, unless invited by the master, and then he was to be contented with what the housekeeper willingly offered him, without presuming to demand anything. For the first offence he was punished by losing the reward of his minstrelsy, and for the second he was compelled to forswear minstrelsy altogether.

Minstrels fell lower and lower, until in the reign of Elizabeth they were included among the rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars, and subject to a like punishment; and in 1589 we find, in Putenham's *Arte of English Poesie*, "tavern minstrels" spoken of with other itinerant vagabonds.

Thus we may sum in a very brief way a curious history of a most important functionary. First he appears as the

skald of Northern history, full of the religious poems, mythological stories, and heroic adventures of his race; singing also the praises of his master and of his master's ancestors, away back to the very gods themselves. Christianity modifies, without absolutely destroying, these stories, and the pagan *skald* becomes the Christian harper and gleeman. Then come the Normans, translating him into a minstrel, with the various branches of the minstrel art, until he dies out as a disgraced vagabond!

The presence of so many persons, all in the category of household servants, whose special duty it was to amuse, would naturally give rise to the custom of mumming or masking, where these people disguised themselves originally in the skins of animals, and subsequently with pasteboard visors and heads of grotesque form. These more ancient disguisements seem to have led to the wildest disorders and most extraordinary malpractices. From their being performed by domestics, it became the fashion to call actors "servants", because originally they were such.

The improprieties and revolting coarseness of these extemporary diversions soon called down the wrath of the Church. Monks and priests took up arms against these plays, but as early as the twelfth century began to represent scenes from Scripture, to attract people to religious matters by appealing to their taste for scenic representation.

According to Warton, the historian of English poetry, the first of these religious performances was composed early in the twelfth century. It was founded on the life of St. Catherine, and was performed at Dunstable by the scholars of the Norman school there. William Fitz Stephen, a writer of the twelfth century, in his description

of London, relates that "London, for its theatrical exhibitions, had holy plays, on the representation of miracles wrought by confessors, and of the sufferings of martyrs." These pieces must have been in high vogue, for Matthew Paris, who wrote about 1240, says that they were such as were commonly called miracles.*

We know that this name continued to be given to these performances until they at last died out. Curious plays they must have been for our forefathers and foremothers to delight in. There would be difficulties in the way of some of the scenes that might stagger our modern ballet managers. But courage and determination were prominent features in those early days, and the story of the creation and fall of man was given with a faithfulness to the letter truly astonishing. After the appropriation of the forbidden fruit the serpent is directed to "*exit hissing*".

The profession of an actor, as opposed to the clerical exhibitor of scenes from sacred history, seems to have been regarded with very great contempt even so early as the middle of the twelfth century, for John of Salisbury, who wrote about 1160, says, "Actors and maskers cannot receive the holy communion."

This is almost enough to convince us that their art must have been very popular, and it cost the monks and other good members of the Church a hard fight to render *their* pieces more attractive to the general public. This opened a door to the wildest profanity. Sacred subjects were treated not only familiarly, but the coarsest buffoonery was mixed up with the representations of subjects which should only be handled with reverence and

* Warton, *Hist. English Poetry*, vol. ii, p. 19. 1840.

awe. The custom of performing these plays in churches was perhaps, under the circumstances of the times, and in view of the movement being a clerical one, nothing more than we might have expected; but it paved the way to the use of the church as a mere play-house, and at last this practice grew to such an enormity that, as late as the reign of Henry VIII, we find Bishop Bonner issuing a proclamation to the clergy of his diocese, dated 1542, prohibiting "all manner of common plays, games, or interludes to be played, set forth, or declared, within their churches, chapels, etc." From this ecclesiastical source of the modern drama, plays continued to be acted on Sundays so late as the reign of Elizabeth, and even till that of Charles the First, by the singing boys of S. Paul's Cathedral and of the royal chapel.

"It is certain that miracle-plays were the first of our dramatic exhibitions. But as these pieces required the introduction of allegorical characters, such as Charity, Sin, Death, Hope, Faith, or the like, and the common poetry of the times, especially among the French, began to deal much in allegory, at length plays were formed entirely consisting of such personifications. These were called *Moralities*. The miracle-plays, or *Mysteries*, were totally destitute of invention or plan; they tamely represented stories according to the letter of Scripture, or the respective legend. But the Moralities indicate dawnings of the dramatic art: they contain some rudiments of a plot, and even attempt to delineate characters and to paint manners. From hence, the transition to real historical characters was natural and obvious, while the introduction of the buffoon, or *Vice*, was a feature that added greatly to the popularity of the exhibitions."*

* Warton, *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, vol. ii, pp. 23, 24.

Amongst the games descending from the *tæfel*, or dice of the early Scandinavians, is our own backgammon itself, an Anglo-Saxon game, as its name denotes, being the *bog-gamen*, or horn play, from the pieces used being made of horn. The word *tæfel* means a die all through Scandinavia, and *att tæfla* is to throw the dice. A similar game on a board was current from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, and being played with dice, was also originally called *tæfle-game;* but when the craze for false Latinity set in, this word was confounded with the word *tabula*, and became applied to the board, not the dice. The process, however, was curious, for although only one board was used, men spoke of playing at "tables", the primary idea of plural being the number of the dice employed, generally three.

To go into the history of every game played by young men and maidens of our day would not answer the purpose of this Lecture, which is chiefly to establish that even in our sports and pastimes we may trace our Scandinavian origin. As long as we have continued English, there has been something at least manly, warlike, and national amongst us, evidenced in the most trivial as well as in the gravest matters. But when we pretend to be what we never can be—Romans or Frenchmen, or any other than English people—we, like the dog in the fable, lose the substance in grasping after the shadow, and have not the consolation of possessing even that.

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